

ARK THE LEGEND

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ROK GAME FANTASY STORY

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ROK
BETA

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Ikram

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The chasing Rama warriors continuously fired at Ark. Ice fragments flew up with every shot along with pillars of flames. Ark tried some evasion but his driving skills weren't mastered yet so it was limited.

Pepepeng!

-The engine has been hit and the output is rapidly decreasing.

If the engine is hit again, there is a risk that it will explode.

Fumes soared from the bike as the message appeared.

‘This situation is bad.’

Ark judged as he turned his handle 180 degrees. The engine of the bike was damaged so the output had fallen. It would be hard to escape from the pursuing Rama warriors. Now Ark only had one choice left.

‘Whether I live or die depends on this.’

Ark's head switched from ‘escape mode’ to ‘battle mode.’

‘I checked through the infrared scope and they are level 41 and 42. On the other hand, I am level 43. My level is slightly higher but there are two of them. Moreover, I'm a prisoner and they are elite troops. They will have better equipment and combat skills. If they have battle suits then the odds aren't in my favour. I need to do something that will slightly even the odds in my favour, even if it is just confusing them for a moment.’

That was the conclusion Ark reached. And a skill naturally floated in his

head.

‘But.....’

Ark was forced to hesitate. Ark still hadn’t grasped the skill properly. He couldn’t guarantee the outcome. It was indeed a skill that he was gambling his life on. He hesitated but Ark had no more time to worry.

Tu tu tu tu! Pepepepeng!

The subsequent shooting exploded the left engine! Ark lost his balance, jumped off the bike and rolled along the ground.

‘I have no choice but to gamble now. I need to trust me senses!’

He lifted his body and raised his arms. Blue light started to gather around his hands. The light produced.....

Hwiiiiii-!

A storm endlessly blew in the darkness. The -50 degree weather was so cold that the air seemed to be frozen. One man was walking in the extreme cold.

“Huck huck, dammit! What is with my unfortunate destiny?”

The person speaking with frozen lips was Ark.

“For it to turn out this way.”

It started 10 days ago. Ark had unintentionally fallen into the crevasse and found an abandoned pyramid. He had ended up with some unexpected gains. He had gained 12 levels, scooped up the rare Zaliman ore and received the Pharaoh’s artifact. He was then able to escape from the pyramid. And the information displayed on the GPS.....

-Distance to the galactic federation’s
base: 532 km

Ark felt like he had been hit on the head with a piece of ice.

‘532 km means that it will take more than 10 days if I walk 50 km in one day.’

It was difficult to walk for 10 days in -50 degrees weather in a snow storm. That alone was enough to decrease the chances of survival. However, the more serious problem was his food supply. Ark had gained a considerable amount of Zaliman ore in the pyramid so he discarded his food and only had 5 remaining. To recap, Ark had to march 500 kilometres on 5 pieces of food in a storm. It was a situation that would cause despair.

‘It’s impossible. There is no chance no matter what ideas I have.’

But if he gave him then he would lose 12 levels. He couldn’t give up even if he ended up dying.

‘I have to live and return!’

Ark clenched his teeth. From then on Ark’s desperate struggle for survival started..... No, it was a desperate struggle but it was actually extremely tedious. Walking, walking, walking and more walking. The only thing he did was walking. The repetition of such unexpected mechanical tasks caused an unexpected problem. Ark had been worried about walking more than 500 km in such a harsh environment. However, Ark’s body was surprisingly strong thanks to the body coating. It was possible to maintain a suitable body temperature while walking in a -50 degree storm. Rather, it was his mentality that was the problem.

‘!#\$!#\$@\$\$\$%\$!&%\$%\$\$#.....’

He was just endlessly walking towards the horizon. His thoughts flew away to Andromeda after one full day of walking. His absentminded state meant he walked in the wrong direction and once he even fell asleep in the freezing cold.

‘This can’t continue. I’m going to end up like a frozen mackerel. I need to

think of something to maintain my consciousness. It is necessary to think of something.’

Ark started to think of various different ideas. His mother who lay in the ICU for a long time and then her miraculous recovery. Now his mother and stepfather Gwon Hwa-rang were helping children overseas. He also thought about that time when he was caught between Roco and Lariette. Although remembering those thoughts helped, there was a limit to it and his thoughts still flew to Andromeda.

It was because those thoughts were just memories. His eyelids became increasingly heavier.

‘That’s right! There was that!’

Something rose in his head. Ark had forgotten his homework from the shock of leaving the pyramid and checking the GPS. It was how to use the Rune Carving that he obtained from the gold room.

‘Why isn’t the skill activating?’

There was no doubt that he learnt a skill that required the photon life form called Shire. Despite that, the skill was cancelled every time he tried to use it.

‘Perhaps a special item is needed aside from the Shire? No, if any items were necessary then it would be written in the skill information window. Didn’t I draw the rune incorrectly or in the wrong order?’

Ark experimented with drawing the rune dozens of times. But it had no effect. He learnt a skill but couldn’t use it. It was enough to drive him crazy. Well, his thoughts didn’t fly away to Andromeda thanks to it but.....

Ark was immersed in figuring out the secret of the rune and had already forgotten about staying conscious. He decided to carefully read the Rune Carving information window while marching.

‘Wait? Come to think of it....’

He finally realized something strange after one whole day had passed. It

became clear once he compared the skill information window and his character information window.

-Rune Carving (User, Active)

When the photon Shire is summoned and a rune carved then a skill will be manifested. Although the Murat civilization is now gone, the Runes once had a profound contribute on their ability to take control of the Bellin constellation.

<It is possible to carve runes in the Shire>

Mana consumption: 10 (+ Mana cost of the Rune)

“Unbelievable.....”

A sigh flowed from his mouth. Ark stared with flustered eyes at the last part of the skill information window.

‘All the skills in the games I’ve played consume mana. So I didn’t think anything about it when mana appeared in the skill information window.....’

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	43
Species	Human	Occupation	Pioneer
Crime	3,500	Adventure	100
Health	800 (+15)	Mental Power	450
Strength	105 (+3)	Agility	155
Stamina	155 (+3)	Wisdom	15
Intelligence	85	Luck	15
* Title: Cleaning Foreman (Agility + 3)			

* Body Coating: Prisoner

- + The Prisoner coating is limited to the region of Beltana.
- + Your body information will belong to the galactic federation after receiving the Prisoner coating.
- + You are unable to receive any other body coating until the Prisoner coating is removed.

‘As expected!’

But Ark had no ‘Mana’ himself. Ark’s character had ‘Mental Power’ as a substitute for mana. Not realizing this basic part was a trap! There was no energy to use the skill which was why it didn’t activate. He had unlocked the secret of Rune Carving.....

“What is this?”

Ark asked with chagrin. No, didn’t that mean he couldn’t use the skill unless he obtained mana? Of course Galaxian also had a presence called mana. Mana had to exist to use the skill but.....

As far as Ark understood, humans didn’t have mana. That’s why humans showed mental power in their information window instead of mana. Mana was a default stat for the hostile Rama and humans who received a magic type body coating. In the end, Ark couldn’t use Rune Carving unless he was a Rama or he obtained the right body coating.

“Not being able to use a 5 star rated skill.....”

Ark was frustrated. Ark couldn’t be reborn as a Rama and he might not chose the magic type body coating later.

“Do I really have to give up?”

Ark suddenly had an idea.

“Wait? Mana?”

The Rama's battle suit Hyper Drone surfaced in his mind! Once again, the Rama's battle suit was different from the federation's and it wasn't a simple machine. The Rama had a bio-type battle suit that could transform thanks to an ancient magical creature called the Drone. Therefore the Hyper Drone used a separate energy source referred to as mana.

"If I'm wearing Hyper Drone....."

Ark called out the battle suit and used the skill.

"Armour armament! Come out, Shire! Rune Carving! Ikram Rune invoked!"

So far, all the runes he had drawn dissolved or disappeared. However, the situation changed due to Hyper Drone. Mana was sucked out of the mana suit and a rune was carved in the air. The ensuing effect.....

-The target for the skill
doesn't exist.

The effect of Rune Carving was still unknown. However, Ark wasn't disappointed.

"Now I know how to use the skill. And the target not being around means that it is a combat skill. It could only be used with the battle suit but it was a 5 star rated skill. It will definitely be an amazing special technique!"

That was what Ark believed. Now he was fighting two level 40 Rama warriors so Ark placed his trust in that identified skill. The five stars gave him confidence!

"Come out, Shire!"

A shout was heard in the midst of the smoke. At the same time, the swirling smoke was split in half. A shining hand moved and carved a character in the sky.

'A five star rated skill! My strongest skill!'

“Rune Carving! Ikram rune invoked!”

An explosive energy emerged from Ark’s body and a huge character was carved above his head. It was the finally completed Ikram rune from the Murat ancient civilization. The highest rated skill also had a visible special effect.

–Ack! That guy has used a skill.

–It is the first time I’ve seen that skill. The effects are unknown so be cautious!

The Rama warriors stopped shooting as they became confused. An enemy had used an unidentified skill seen for the first time. In online games, the skill effect could mean the difference between victory or defeat. Ark believed that and had no doubts.

“Now, come out!”

Ark stretched out his arms and grinned. However.....

–.....What?

The Rama warriors who had opened their shields and struck a defense pose tilted their heads to one side. Ark was also baffled. The rune sparkling above his head.....it just shone like a christmas tree light Nothing happened once it was activated. Ark looked at the message that appeared on his Nympe.

-The target for the skill
doesn’t exist.

“T-there is no target?”

What was it saying when the target was right in front of him? Ark looked at the Nympe with amazement before belatedly realizing something.

‘Wait? That reminds mind....the message never stated the subject of the skill. The only thing written was that there was no target. Then there is no

guarantee that the target is the enemy.'

Ark felt like he had been hit in the back of the head. It was natural to think that the skill would be used on the enemy. But there was one thing Ark overlooked. There was no enemy in the vicinity when experimenting with the skill. There also weren't any supporters.

'But now there are enemies. If the target can't be found then this rune.....'

It was a skill used to buff any allies.

'Buff! A buff? I wasted the mana of my battle suit in this situation for a buff? And it's also a buff for allies?'

Ark started to panic as he reached that conclusion. However, now wasn't the time for it.

—What is he doing?

—What is that shining thing? No way.....is it just for looks?

—No. We still don't know. We can't be careless.

—.....

—Isn't it just a shape?

The Rama warriors then noticed Ark's reaction.

—Dammit, tricking us like that.

—I don't understand what it is but let's just break it!

And they changed the magazine of their gun. The Rama couldn't understand Ark's words but Ark could understand the Rama. By listening to their conversation, Ark knew the two warriors wanted to turn Ark into a honeycomb. Well, he would be able to guess it from the atmosphere even without hearing their words. It was obvious Ark was their target.

'Now the only thing left is a frontal confrontation!'

Ark had been tempered by battle for many years. He grasped the situation and moved his body first.

‘It is two against one so it is imperative that I reduce the numbers!’

Ark’s eyes looked at the troopers armed with a RPG and a grenade launcher. In Galaxian, warriors used a sword and a gun by default. In other words, they had a melee weapon and a long range weapon. But that wasn’t the only thing commonly used. Pistols, rifles, machine guns or something relatively light were easily available. But heavy weapons such as RPGs and grenade launchers required the relevant skills. Since a large number of professional skills are needed, the trooper was the class with the strongest firepower to counteract it.

Galaxian also had Espers who used ancient magic or psychic powers but most users were level 30~40 so they couldn’t use really powerful magic yet.

At the moment, the troopers were the ones boasting the strongest firepower. Their firepower was so strong that the military situation could change with the use of the heavy weapons. The troopers use of the heavy weapons would devastate the prisoner unit every time there was a battle. However, every strong point had a disadvantage. The long range bombing attack meant they were weaker in close combat. Furthermore, the heavy armour and artillery meant their movements were slow.

‘I need to handle one guy first!’

Ark judged that in an instant and shot towards the troopers.

-Eh? That guy....

A trooper hurriedly lifted the grenade launcher. But Ark’s movements were faster.

“Sonic Sword!”

It was Sonic Sword that surpassed sonic speed. The sword made a shock wave that hit the bikes of the troopers. It also hit the grenade launcher and

turned it, making the ammunition fly away in a different direction. If the firing was disrupted and the hit rate fell that the troopers weakness was clearly revealed.

-T-this!

The troopers burst out and pointed the gun towards him again. But Ark had already approached one of them. And he planned to stab the warrior's neck.

Buaaaah!

An intimidating engine sound was heard from nearby. Ark turned around and saw a trooper's bike rushing towards him. The Rama warriors had been 50 metres away when Ark activated Rune Carving. If the troops only used machines gun then there was no way to stop Ark in close combat. The machine gun's hit rate wasn't high enough to hit a moving target so he only needed to block it for a few metres. Then there was only one way left!

'They can hit my using the movement of the bike.'

Now Ark wasn't a beginner in Galaxian any longer. He knew about the weapons and equipment of the future so he was able to predict the enemy's movements. Their opponent.....was Ark.

Kakang! Chwiiiiii!

Ark's sword collided with the trooper's grenade launcher. Ark turned at the same time and the sword moved the grenade launcher's barrel to one side. It turned towards the direction where the trooper's motorcycle was rushing from!

Tutung!

Something fired from the grenade launcher.

-Heok! What are you doing?

The rushing trooper screamed and turned the steering wheel but it was useless. The bike was only 2 metres away so there was no way it could avoid

the fired grenade. Flames shot up from the trooper's bike. That was the moment Ark aimed for.

“Now! Sonic sword!”

Ark rolled on the ground and hit the bike with his sword. The bike lost its centre of balance and turned 90 degrees, rushing towards the other trooper.

–Heok! N-no! I-it's going to hit me! Avoid it!

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The two bikes collided and an explosion shook the space. The explosion pushed Ark back several metres and he gasped as he raised his body.

“Pant pant pant, it is a success.”

This was what Ark had aimed for. In fact, Ark was more worried about the presence of the bikes than a 2 vs. 1 battle. The bikes had no combat capability but it had fast movement speed. However, their speed meant they couldn't be ignored in battle. If they rode their bikes then Ark wouldn't be able to catch up to fight in close combat. They could just avoid him and shoot from a distance. There was also no room to fight. Sealing the bikes. That was the first checkpoint of the battle he had to pass.

“.....That is around 30%?”

Ark sighed and lifted his head. He threw his body before the bike collided but he couldn't completely escape the explosion. Despite wearing the battle suit, Ark still lost 30% health. However he had no complaints. It was fortunate that he could seal up the motorcycle.....

–Kuuuuoh, t-this guy!

Two shadows staggered from the smoke. The Rama warriors were covered in dust. Their appearances looked dismal because they were caught in the explosion. Their agility and defense had fallen by 45% while their health had decreased by 60%. They glared at Ark through darkened faces.

–Kill him! That bastard.....

Pepeng-!

The trooper stumbled and stepped backwards as there was a ringing sound. Ark scratched his head after firing a shot.

“Ah, I’m sorry. I’m in a hurry. What were you saying?”

-This bastard.....Armour armament!

A trooper glared and muttered. The space warped and a battle suit appeared around the trooper. It was the Rama’s battle suit that looked like an insect skin. The overall shape was similar to the Hyper Drone but the battle suit seemed heavier.

‘I thought they would have battle suits but.....’

-Tails, cover me!

The trooper changed weapons to a long sword and struck downwards. Ark raised his sword and felt a tremendous pressure as he blocked it.

Totong! Kakakakak!

It felt like 100 kg of steel was brought down upon him. Ark felt his knees buckle as he maintained his grip on the sword.

‘Ugh! This strength, it’s not normal. As expected.....’

Ark breathed roughly as he looked at the trooper’s battle suit. The shoulder of the trooper was swollen like a balloon and the thick tendons continuously twitched.

‘There’s no doubt about it. That is a warrior type battle suit.’

It was like comparing a dog to a private school student. There was no need to say which one was Ark. In was unnecessary to say it again but Ark was forcibly drafted into Beltana’s prisoner unit.

On the other hand, it was useful because Ark could learn many things about

the systems of Galaxian. Something he learnt was information about advanced battle suits. Ark's Hyper Drone battle suit increased his stats by 30%. However, all battle suits increased stats. No, battle suits that raised all stats equally were rare. Most battle suits had specialized functions depending on the character tendencies and their occupation.

Some amplified mana or mental power for magician type users while battle suits for rangers had their eyesight optimized. It was possible to determine what type of battle suit it was from the outward appearance. But unlike the federation's mechanical battle suits, the Rama's battle suits could change their form. The trooper had a warrior type battle suit that increased his muscle.

‘This is just a guess but I imagine it increases strength. How much did his strength increase by?’

The trooper's shoulder muscles bulged as he brought his sword down. Ark felt like he was being pushed down by a giant compressor. It was hard to even breath. Thankfully Ark was also wearing the battle suit. But the problem wasn't the sword.

-Tails, now!

-Okay. This bastard, I'll make you regret this!

The other trooper laughed and aimed a grenade launcher at Ark. In this situation, Ark wouldn't be able to move at all to avoid it! If he was hit by the Rama warrior's sword and the artillery then the battle would be over.

‘But.....’

Ark smiled and raised his head. Ark's finger that was gripping the sword moved quickly.

“Set Bullets Shooting!”

Cheolkeok, cheolkeok, cheolkeok! Pepepeng!

Three bullets spouted from his sword and burst into flames. Ark wasn't using the Modified Alloy Dagger right now. It was the unique two-handed Impact Blade that he obtained from the pyramid! The biggest feature that made it unique was that it wasn't just a blade. It was the combination of a blade and pistol. He could still fire a projectile even while holding Impact Blade with both hands! The trooper had never seen the weapon before so he had no idea of its effect. The shot was fired right under the trooper's nose and the trooper's head snapped back.

-Headshot!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 150% damage>

—*Kuak! T-this is?*

Smoke appeared from around the trooper's head and he stepped backwards.

Tung-! Tung-! Tung-! Tung-!

The trooper launched the grenade immediately after that. The bullet hit the ground but Ark already wasn't there. Ark aimed his sword at the trooper and shouted.

“Impact Shot!”

Kakakaka! Pepepepeng!

When the blade touched the trooper's chest and he pulled the trigger, flames appeared from the sword and bullets lodged in the chest. Impact Shot dealt additional 50% damage! The health of the trooper was instantly sucked out.

—*Eh? Eh? What, what the? H-how come?*

The trooper burst out with confusion and rushed towards him again. The situation would be disturbing for anyone who didn't know about the gun in the blade. However, he had no intention of explaining. Anyway, the situation

was changed thanks to his blade but Ark couldn't afford to relax.

-Hyper Drone's Remaining
Mana: 20%.

'Only a little more left.'

Ark looked at the Nymphe's irritated eyes with irritation. Ark had worn the battle suit from the time he sneaked into the Rama base. And while stealing the bike up to here. Quite a bit of time had been consumed.

'But only 15 minutes had passed. The duration of the battle suit is 30 minutes. Therefore I should still have 50% mana left. However, now there's only 20%. Then perhaps.....'

Ark looked at the flashing character above his head with irritation. The rune he triggered before the battle was still flashing above Ark's head. Mana was leaking out somewhere. It meant the rune was still sucking out mana despite having no effect. He also couldn't cancel it. If he converted the remaining 20% mana then it would be 6 minutes left.

'Damn, I still don't know what that skill is for!'

If he hadn't done something so unnecessary then it would be possible to fight for longer. But it was too late for regret. At first he was worried about fighting against two level 40 Rama warriors but they weren't that tough an opponent for him.

'It's not that they're weak.'

Ark was completely different from his existence 10 days ago. His level was different. He gained 12 levels thanks to the pyramid. His defense also increased thanks to the Harkenion Armour dropped by the dead Rama warrior in the crevasse! His attack also increased thanks to the Impact Blade! He could also use the battle suit without any federation members around so his combat sense had changed 180 degrees.

‘6 minutes! The odds are in my favour!’

Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Chwarururu.

Ark loaded the ammunition into the Impact Blade and approached a trooper.

–Kuak! T-this bastard!

The trooper growled and blocked with his sword. At first he struggled because he hadn’t experienced the warrior type battle suit but now he grasped the situation. Ark lowered his upper body and blocked the sword.

‘As expected!’

The focus of the battle suit was on strength and defense, not agility. It was a common build used in Galaxian. He didn’t know how much the strength and defense had decreased by but it was certain the agility would fall. Ark also thought that the trooper’s skill with a sword wasn’t that great. They were like rice compared to Ark. Ark had grown rapidly from his previous experience with a game. Of course, his previous game was different from Galaxian. However, the style of battle wasn’t that different in the future. Plus.....

–This rat.....heok!

The trooper who was frantically swinging his sword fell to one knee with confusion. Ark had stepped back to avoid the sword and kicked. His kicks had an effect against enemies thanks to the battle suit. His kicks were aimed at the warrior’s knees and joints.

“You’re noisy. This isn’t a war with words.”

Ark looked down at the trooper’s face and smiled. Then he continued with the knee. An attack with the battle suit covered knee would be tremendous. There was a crack as the trooper’s head was forced upwards with the impact. He followed with the Impact Blade to the neck.

Snap! Pepepeng!

He then followed with the Impact Shot!

“Now now, it’s only starting. If this stretched on too long then it’ll be difficult.”

Ark walked towards the trooper. The trooper wasn’t a match for Ark in close combat. He continued kicking the joints to make the trooper lose his centre of balance and attacked with his sword and bullets. The defense style of the battle suit wasn’t made to combat Ark’s fighting style. Virtual reality games placed precedence on combat skills more than equipment. Neutralizing the troopers in a situation like this wasn’t a problem for him.

–Ugh! Ugh! Tails, what are you doing? Help me!

–I-I’m trying! That jerk!

The other trooper listened to the request and raised the grenade launcher. The moment the trigger was pulled, Ark quickly moved behind the trooper.

–Damn! You asked for help so why are you blocking me?

–Are your eyes working? Do you think I’m willingly blocking him? That bastard keeps moving!

–Then you should catch him properly so I can shoot him!

–Dammit, I can’t catch him like this.....ugh!

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

The troopers kept on missing him.

–Yes, you try to catch him instead. I.....

The trooper tried to get out of the way as he kept getting hit by stray bullets.

‘Heh, long range and close combat.....I’ve have experience with such a combination before.’

It wasn’t that different from the combination of an archer and warrior.

And Ark had fought that combination thousands of times in the other game. The trooper cursed as he kept on moving. When one final grenade hit the

trooper.....

–T-this isn't possible!

The trooper muttered as he was turned into a bloody rice cake and collapsed.

“Now I don't have to be concerned about the fight.”

Since he started Galaxian, he felt like something had been blocked and now that feeling was gone.

It still couldn't be compared to the previous game but he had adapted to fighting inside Galaxian.

Anyway, Ark was satisfied with the battle and his damage. No matter how proficient his skills in close combat, it was useless if it didn't do any damage. He also only had 30% health left by the time he killed one trooper. His battle suit only had 7% mana left.

‘But this is enough to take care of the other trooper!’

The trooper wasn't a worthy opponent for him in a 1 on 1 fight. They boasted the strongest firepower in a long range fight but were weak in melee combat.

‘I need to take care of him quickly!’

-Hiik!

Ark turned around with a pleasant smile towards the surprised trooper holding the grenade launcher. And he pulled the trigger with a flustered look.

Tutung!

“Let's continue playing. Shield!”

Ark ran towards the trooper and opened his shield. He ignored the grenade and ran forward to neutralize the trooper. There was a blue flash as the grenade collided with his shield and a transparent crystal surrounded Ark's body. A message window flashed in front of Ark.

-You have been hit by the special grenade 'Prison Crystal!'

Prison crystal is a special equipment that traps all life forms within a 2 metre area. The trapped life forms can't escape the confinement unless the crystal is destroyed. At the same time, it can also receive damage from the outside. However, if the crystal is destroyed from the outside then the life forms inside will receive damage depending on the durability of the crystal.

<Prison Crystal (Beginner) Durability: 500>

"P-prison crystal?"

Ark felt his heart drop as he read the information window. This was the first time Ark had seen a special grenade. He only experienced the special bullets on the battlefield. However, prisoners couldn't know the information about weapons the regular troops used.

"I'm trapped in here unless the crystal is destroyed!"

Ark currently had 150 health left. If the crystal was destroyed then he would die. Ark had to escape the crystal before that happened. However, Ark had no skill that would give 500 damage at once. No, he did.

'18 Barrage from the battle suit!'

But 18 Barrage would use up the remaining mana from the battle suit. He also only had 7% mana left so it would be difficult to get the desired effect. No, he wouldn't be able to defeat the trooper even if he broke the crystal with 18 Barrage.

-Ha, I finally caught you.

It wasn't surprising that the trooper laughed as he looked at Ark. And pulled out a mini missile launcher. He leisurely took out an ammunition and loaded it.

–Do you think I’m easy? Wait a moment. I’ll give you a show.

‘.....Oh my god!’

Ark’s head was blank. Ark knew better than anyone the power of the small missile launcher. It was the small missiles that the prisoners always experienced first when fighting the Rama. A lot of time was needed to aim but it literally launched a missile. If a level 30~40 warrior received a direct hit from it then it was game over! It was the trooper’s strongest attack.

‘I’m screwed! There is no guarantee that I can destroy the crystal with 7% mana left. No, it’s the same even if I use 18 Barrage. 18 Barrage is a skill where I can’t move until it ends. Even if the crystal is destroyed, the missile will still hit me.’

The missile would hit him by the time 18 Barrage finished. However, he had no choice.

‘Dammit, 18 Barrage.....’

Ark clenched his fist and shouted. All of a sudden, the rune floating above his head started cracking. A translucent form like a ghost appeared before him. It was a person with the head of a dog! Surprisingly, it was someone that looked like the Anubis he saw in the pyramid. It was the manifestation of Anubis, the god of the underworld in ancient Egypt.

‘W-what is this?’

Ark couldn’t understand the situation. The Anubis was drawn into the body of the dead trooper after it appeared. Then the body of the dead trooper shook and stood upwards. Amazingly it shook off the blood and changed forms!

‘Eh? T-the dead Rama warrior? No, but the body is.....’

Anubis was a god with a dog’s head. But a dog with the face of a human emerged from the trooper’s stomach. A dog with the face of a trooper had appeared from the corpse. Ark was in a state of panic from this strange

situation.

- The target for the Ikram rune has been found.
- The Ikram rune has been completed and information about it received.

Ikram (Hell hound)- Ikram is an ancient Murat rune that symbolizes Anubis who is the gatekeeper of the underworld. The Murat long believed that the photon life form Shire contained a special divine power and finally succeeded in a realization.

By drawing the rune that symbolizes Anubis in the Shire, the user can offer a sacrifice to summon the hell hound that guards the underworld. The ability of the summoned hell hound depends on the original ability of the sacrifice. When summoned, the hell hound will consume 1 mana ever second and will move according to the user's command.

<A hell hound will be summoned when a sacrifice is offered. 1 mana will be consumed every second>

‘This is the way to use Rune Carving?’

Ark stuttered at the information window with an absurd expression. When he used the skill the first time, he thought it wouldn't activate because the target wasn't in the area. And he thought it was because there were no allies in the area. However, his allies weren't the target. It was because there were no corpses to be sacrificed!

.....This was a surprising skill! Ark felt uncomfortable but there was no time to worry about it.

At least the skill was confirmed. But now his life was about to fly away! If he died here then the levels and skill he gained from the pyramid would also be deleted. He would lose the skill the moment he confirmed the information.

‘The skill was triggered but only freaky dog with the face of a human showed up!’

Even if he used 18 Barrage, there was a 30% chance the crystal wouldn't smash.

And now a dog who ate his mana appeared.

'Dammit, if my mana hadn't been absorbed by that abnormal dog then 18 Barrage.....'

Ark clenched his fist and was about to move when he stopped.

'No. That's not it!'

–Kikiki, you've waited a long time. I'll send it now. You're dead.

The trooper smiled and lifted the missile launcher. Ark contemplated for a moment before raising his head and shouting.

"Dammit! No! 18 Barrage!"

The shoulder part of his battle suit opened and steam emerged. At the same time, his arms moved at a rapid fire speed like engines were attached to it.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Cracks appeared in the crystal and splinters flew with every hit. Confusion spread on the trooper's face as the crystal vibrated.

–W-what is that? He was still hiding a skill? But it is too late!

And the trigger of the missile launcher was pulled!

Kung kung kung kung!

–What, what the? –Heok! N-no!

The trooper's confusion continued.....

Kwa kwa kwa kwa, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

There was a flash and a huge mushroom cloud appeared. And Ark who was confined to the crystal.....

-Your level has risen!

His level rose.

-Achievement + 120.

He also earned bonus achievements.

“.....I-I lived!”

Ark muttered as he looked at the smoke from inside the crystal. Ark was able to survive with the help of the hell hound. Right before Ark used 18 Barrage, he ordered the hell hound to attack the trooper.

The trooper was so busy loading and charging the missile that he hadn't noticed the presence of the hell hound. When he was about to launch the missile, the hell hound had unexpectedly appeared in front of the trooper. The hell hound was hit directly by the launched missile and died. And the trooper only had 40% health left so he had also died from the blast. He had taken care of two things with the sacrifice of the dog.

“Impact Shot!”

Ku ku ku ku ku!

After a while, the crystal broke and Ark emerged. His body wasn't damaged thanks to the sacrifice of the Ikram rune. The corpse of the trooper was more damaged from the explosion and the items dropped.....

-C-6 (×3)

Item type: Explosives

Attack: 500 (To facilities x5)

An improved version of the tradition C-4 bomb widely used throughout the galaxy. Although C-4 has a proper mix of TNT and RDX, C-6 has more REX which amplifies the explosive power. It is especially devastating when destroying metal or stone buildings.

<The target will explode after the timer is set>

* Caution! It can be very dangerous if you don't have the relevant explosives skill.

"This is something all troopers carry around. Damn, I'd rather they drop food."

Ark packed the C-6 and looked around. He couldn't be relieved after taking care of the pursuing troopers. Although the Rama base was in a state of confusion from fire, there was no telling how long it would take for them to notice the missing bike. And a missile had also just exploded. This was kilometres away from the Rama base but it was possible they might've noticed.

"I have to escape before they come here."

Ark looked at the distant horizon.

-Distance to the galactic federation's base: 444km

"444 km....."

It was the unluckiest number.

Beyond the Crisis

Pushu-!

The carapace tightened seamlessly. Steam appeared in the gaps and the carapace gradually separated. The shell that separated from the body rotated and folded like a puzzle into a hexagonal object the size of a small shield. The hexagonal object was drawn into a warped space. Then a man could be seen from within the steam.

“Pant pant pant, pant pant pant!”

The man sat on the ground and gasped for breath.

“Pant pant pant! Dammit.....pant pant pant! This is the limit.....”

The battered man who looked at the wild snow storm with blank eyes was Ark.

“Pant pant pant, then.....my decision was a bit.....”

Ark murmured with a regretful expression. Now long ago, Ark had defeated 2 Rama warriors. He had experienced numerous trials and errors after starting Galaxian approximately 2 months ago. He was too accustomed to the previous game and hadn't adapted to the new game, with his pride as a legendary gamer causing he to suffer and make many mistakes. This was the reason he was on Beltana. Therefore Ark became bleak. It was similar to someone born in a first world country encountering a wall for the first time. Of course, he managed to resolve the issue in his own way. But he had been asked by the government to start Galaxian so he had lost confidence. He was lost in despair when forcibly drafted and sent to Beltana.

‘Now it is different!’

He would starve and die without Iridium. Even if he someone managed to obtain food, the prisoners death rate was 80%! Most prisoners conscripted

like Ark found the environment of Beltana so hopeless that some users even gave up the game. But Ark had persisted. He found the solution to his hunger through Dig and organized the Royal Guards and mobilized them on the battle field to increase his survival rate. However, the decisive thing was what he found in the pyramid. Ark had struggled for 10 days in the pyramid and obtained a jackpot. It was how Ark was able to beat the 2 level 40 Rama warriors. And all of Ark's misgivings were gone. He wouldn't give up just because of some hardships. No, it was an opportunity to become stronger! Hardship was a process towards growth. However, the triumphant feeling was very brief.

“Dammit!”

Curses emerged from Ark's mouth after the battle ended. It was because of a message that appeared on his Nymph.

-The Nymph has connected to the bike's system.

The check has confirmed that there is serious damage to the engine and battery. The central function of the bike has been 80% destroyed and it won't work anymore.

At first Ark had been anxious when the Rama warrior first caught up. Before entering the pyramid, Ark wouldn't have been strong enough to defeat level 40 Rama warriors. And there were two of them! So Ark gave up on the battle and wanted a way to escape them.

“Then.....if I hadn't destroyed the bikes when fighting the Rama warrior.....”

Severe regret surged like a tidal wave. In the end there was nothing he could do about losing the bikes. Ark didn't have the mechanic skill so he couldn't repair it. However, he couldn't return to the Rama base again. The Rama base was currently like a stirred bee hive thanks to Ark's previous actions.

Returning there would be like suicide. There was only one choice remaining.

“I have to continue onwards.”

At this point, he only had 4 food remaining. The distance to the federation's base was 444 km. If he combined the characters 4 times then it was 4444! It was like the number was saying ‘Huhuhu. Give up. There is no future.’ It was a number that made his motivation fall.

‘As expected, it is impossible. I have to walk more than 400 km with only 4 foods left.’

The result was as obvious as ‘ $1+1=2$.’ But he had no choice. Unless a miracle happened, Ark's chances of survival was 0.0001%. However, if he gave up then he would 100% die. At the same time, experience equivalent to 13 levels would fly away. He could either wait and commit suicide and continued and die! A miracle could happen to those who didn't give up.

“Bah! Don't make me laugh! I'll just change the number!”

Ark swallowed a piece of food and stood up. Ark's satiety increased by 30% to 50% and he quickly changed the 4444 to 3444 km. And he marched, marched, marched through the snow storm!

-Your satiety has fallen to 50% and you are in a ‘hungry’ state.

<If the satiety decreases below 49% then you still start to receive a penalty to your stats. Please eat some food>

Umul umul. If he chewed the food while walking then his satiety would increase to 50%.

-The battle suit Hyper Drone's mana has been 100% charged.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

If the battle suit was charged then he would immediately take it out and ran quickly. Ark spent two days marching like this without any breaks. Therefore he managed to move 150 km after the second day.

“Pant pant pant! U-unbelievable!”

Ark felt despair as he was confronted with the reality. The direction and destination was shown on the Nymphe’s GPS. Ark headed towards the federation’s base after leaving the pyramid but it wasn’t marked on the map. The other day, Ark had only been caught by the Rama warrior because a crevasse had blocked his way. And the same situation occurred over and over. This time it wasn’t a crevasse but a snow covered mountain. A snow covered mountain was blocking his path. It was that high but the mountain was covered in snow and ice. It was like a wall for Ark who was already depleted of strength. He could turn around and go a different path but.....

-Your satiety had fallen to 20% and you are in a ‘starving’ state.

<Your stats have fallen by 50% and you will die if satiety reaches 0%>

“Up to here.....”

In fact, the problem wasn’t the snow covered mountain. All his food had disappeared while moving the 150 km. He had no choice but to watch his satiety fall. The run with his battle suit was his last struggle. Now the battle suit was also gone while charging. Once the shell wrapping his body disappeared, the chill he couldn’t feel surged. It was difficult to maintain his body temperature while starving. Besides, his stats had fallen by a lot so his movements felt heavier.

“There is still 290 km until the federation’s base.....”

There was also a huge mountain interrupting him. Now the answer had

appeared. The miracle didn't happen. There was no hope. Ark back up and muttered in an empty voice.

“There is no use in struggling anymore. I don't have anything left. Here.....it is the end.”

The -50 degrees storm enveloped Ark's body in an instant. His eyelids became white and frozen. Darkness loomed.

“Hah!”

He opened his eyes. He hurriedly jumped up and looked around. It was so dark it was difficult to discern the area in front of him. The large, black eyes blinked a few times and adjusted to the dim environment. The first thing he saw was a rugged wall. The rough walls reflected the interior. And there were iron bars across the window. The iron bars were red from the rust. A sigh flowed from his mouth as he looked at the iron window.

“Phew, it was just a dream.”

The person wiping the sweat off his brow was a hamster! Once again, the reason Ark was sent to Beltana was because of the ‘federation museum theft incident’ that shook up Nephalim. But this incident wasn't committed by Ark alone. His accomplice, not the mastermind was.....the mastermind was the hamster Tori! Ark fell for Tori's incitement and became involved in the stealing event. Anyway.....

“Why did I have that dream all of a sudden? And I clearly just emerged from a dream.....”

Tori scratched his head and revisited his memory. A land covered with ice and a raging snow storm appeared in his dreams. The place was so cold his body trembled just remembering it. One man had collapsed in the midst of the snow storm. The corpse was being buried by snow! Surprisingly the

identity of the body was.....

“Ark! It was undoubtedly Ark.”

He had forgotten about Ark for the last two months.

“That Ark bastard, wasn’t he sent to Beltana as punishment? Beltana was a place where the weather was -50 degrees and a storm had been raging for a fortnight. He could only imagine the cold. At any rate, that guy was unlucky. Who would like being drafted to a place like that? So why did Ark appear in his dream all of a sudden? Dreaming of that Ark guy of all people.....wait? Perhaps.....this dream.....”

Tori trailed off as he suddenly raised his head. Once again, Ark wasn’t the only one affected by the museum theft. Ark was conscripted because he was a pioneer so he could revive through the Fairy. Meanwhile, Tori wasn’t a pioneer so he had his business and all his assets confiscated. He was also imprisoned for two years in the Stael prison.

‘Well it is still better than Ark but.....’

Prison life wasn’t comfortable. The prisoners were given free meals from the federation but it wasn’t that easy to receive. They only had 6 hours to sleep while the rest of the day was spent working. They only received one free food when the quota was fulfilled. The Space Food was made through processed space bugs. It was the most painful thing for a vegetarian who only ate acorns and sunflower seeds. He still ate but his weight had decreased by 10 kg in two months. His formerly thick stomach that he had been proud of was no slender and shabby.

‘I’d rather die than spend 2 years here!’

Tori made up his mind.

‘I have to escape!’

He decided to escape from Stael! Of course, Stael wasn’t that easy to escape

even if the hamster made up his mind. Stael was the name of a space prison that orbited Istana. The security was so perfect that no one had managed to escape over the past decades. However, Tori had a plan to break through the weak point. During the last two months, Tori had participated in the forced labour and ate meat while proceeding with his plan. And now there was only a few days left before it could proceed! Then he had a dream where Ark died.

‘Perhaps.....this dream.....’

“It is a lucky dream!”

Tori’s fingers tapped as he laughed. Tori believed the cause of his circumstances was Ark. It wasn’t a baseless idea. If Ark hadn’t caused the unexpected explosion then Tori would be swimming in gold. It was 100% because of Ark that Tori was in jail.

“Hihihihi, that’s right. Seeing Ark freezing to death is definitely a lucky dream. Having this dream several days before carrying out my escape plan is indeed lucky! Hihihihi, I’ve had a premonition. The revelation of heaven made it clear that my plan will succeed.”

Tori chuckled and made a lot of noise.

“Hey!”

A rough voice shook the room. Tori flinched and turned his head. 10 pairs of eyes stared at Tori in the darkness. The federation wasn’t merciful enough to give prisoners a solitary cell. One room had 10 prisoners living together. This was the biggest reason Tori was determined to escape. Similar species were placed together in order to avoid incidents. Tori was a hamster and the official name for his species was the Tiny Clan. But normally the Tiny Clan were well behaved so there were no other hamsters in Stael. Therefore Tori was classified as part of several common animal aliens.....

“Why is this rodent being so noisy?”

The prisoner with yellow eyes and exposed fangs was the Katz clan. They

were a cat type alien. A rodent and a cat.....

It was impossible for there to be a friendly relationship. Ever since Tori entered Stael, part of his daily routine was to be beaten up by the Katz.

‘It is impossible! Staying with these guys for two years? I’d rather die!’

Tori was also engaged in a fierce struggle for survival. Tori sweated and started stuttering as 10 set of eyes stared at him.

“I-I had a dream.....”

“Nobody cares about your dream.”

The biggest cat scratched his head. Then he yawned and said to his colleagues.

“That rodent woke us up from our pleasurable sleep. Hey, that guy still doesn’t seem to understand. He seems to need more education.”

“W-wait a minute! I-I was wrong! S-save me!”

“Is anyone being killed?”

The cat laughed.

“We’re just playing. Ya, he’s noisy so cover his mouth!”

A cat ran up and wound a blanket around Tori. Once the blanket was fully wrapped, the 10 cats started beating him up. It was a situation of bullying going on in the universe! The 21st century social problem was still occurring in the 24th century.

‘Ack! D-dammit! This is because of that Ark bastard! He should go to hell!’

Tori hurled curses at Ark as he was turned into a bloody rice cake.

Hwiiiiii-!

The snow storm was still swirling on the frigid planet of Beltana. On the

outskirts of the federation base, there was a man turned to stone from the snow storm. With grey skin and black eyes, he was the Grey known as Hegel.

“Hyung-nim.....”

Hegel murmured in a low voice.

“He’s not here yet?”

An old man approached with a bittersweet expression. He was the highest ranked prisoner in the Royal Guards after Ark called Mellin. Mellin looked at Hegel and said.

“Of course I’m hoping that Ark returned. I didn’t properly realize it when he was with us at the barracks but Ark is the centre of our group. But I realized it after Ark was gone. His presence wasn’t that simple. He gave us both comfort and hope. All the members are sincerely wishing that he returns.”

Mellin sighed and shook his head.

“But Ark has already been gone for 12 days. Even if it was different from Berad’s testimony and he somehow managed to survive, it has been 12 days. I’ve been here for 1 year. I’ve seen a lot of situations. I’ve seen many people who gave up resurrecting and chose death. Maybe Ark.....”

“That is impossible!”

Someone interrupted Mellin’s words. Mellin and Hegel flinched and looked at the group around him. They were Berad, Ralph, Kalliben and the other members of the Royal Guards. The Royal Guards looked different from their appearances 12 days ago. They didn’t have to worry about food when Ark was there. However, the circumstances changed after Ark disappeared. Their food supply relied on Ark so there were serious problems after he was gone. Valencia also began to disturb the Royal Guards when they were finding the Iridium. The food situation of the Royal Guards worsened and they died many times of starvation during the last 12 days. Therefore the Royal Guards

returned to their previous zombie like appearances.....

“Hyung-nim wouldn’t desert us!”

Berad nodded at Ralph’s head and said.

“Yes, I still remember the last time I saw Hyung-nim. Hyung-nim held the body of the enemy and threw himself into the crevasse! He has the fortitude of a warrior! Hyung-nim wouldn’t abandon us when we’re like blood brothers to him!”

“He might have some difficulties but Hyung-nim will definitely return!”

“Hyung-nim even laughed and took a bullet for me on the battlefield! I believe in Hyung-nim!”

“Me too! One month. No, I will even wait 1 year for Hyung-nim!”

“Y-you guys.....”

Mellin looked at them with shocked eyes. Then he shed tears from his wrinkled eyes and said.

“Ugh! Y-yes. Yes. My heart feels the same as well. It is like you said. It is impossible for Ark to desert us. He will return no matter what. I believe it. Now I need to gather my courage. I’ll wait for him without losing hope. We are Ark’s Royal Guards.”

“Oh, Grandfather Mellin!”

The Royal Guards clamoured as they ran up to Mellin. They embraced each other and shed a fountain of tears.

Buuuuong!

Suddenly the Fairy in the central square vibrated and emitted a light.

“F-Fairy!”

“There hasn’t been any battles for the last few days so why is the Fairy activating? Perhaps?”

“Hyung-nim! Hyung-nim has returned!”

The Royal Guards looked at the Fairy with expectant eyes after hearing Hegel’s words. Meanwhile the light from the Fairy produced the shape of a person like a 3D printer. The biological tissue overlapped over molecules and formed a person!

“.....Cupa?”

Cupa was a member of the Royal Guards. The expectant looks on the members’ faces turned disappointed.

“You.....did you starve and die again?”

“I was hungry so I sat down and ended up dying.”

Cupa said while looking at his thin stomach with a melancholy expression. In fact, there were two other aliens in the Royal Guards apart from Hegel. Kalliben was from the Unkara clan and resembled a human but with 3 eyes. The 3 eyes of the Unkara clan meant they had excellent eyesight and were a species specialized in sniping. And Cupa was from the Tobil clan and his size was twice the size of humans. Their large frame meant the Tobil clan’s energy consumption was twice as much! While the other members had died three or four times, Cupa had died 8 times from starvation. As soon as Cupa was resurrected, he grabbed his growling stomach and was in tears.

“I-I’m hungry. Am I going to die again?”

The members looked at Cupa and sighed painfully.

“If only we could definitely know whether Hyung-nim died or not.....”

“No!”

Ark raised his upper body.

“I won’t! I can’t die like this!”

He had no other methods and no hope. Ark had tried to give up and humbly accepted death but.....

“How did I get this far? I can’t just die like this!”

His regret at the thought of dying exploded into anger. If he was going to die then he should’ve just died when he exited the pyramid. But he had grabbed his stomach and walked for several days through the storm. If he died then it would’ve been a waste of all that time! Ark shook his head wildly and forcibly woke up his body.

“Live! I’m going to live! Even if I have to hit dirt!”

Ark took out his shovel with a spellbound expression. And he started shovelling like crazy.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

The dirt flew around as he continued digging.

Tang-!

-You have discovered
Iridium!

It was a huge chunk of Iridium. It was approximately 3~4 kg so such a huge chunk of Iridium was a jackpot.

“Dammit, I don’t need a chunk of stone!”

But Ark couldn’t throw it away. 100 grams of Iridium was worth 10 copper worth of Space Food so 1 kg of Iridium was worth 1 silver of food. The actual value of 3~4 kg wasn’t just 3~4 silver. The only way for prisoners to get food was to find Iridium. It was worth as much of their lives on Beltana. But Ark couldn’t eat it so it had no meaning to him now. Ark’s bag was also full of the Zaliman ore worth 2~3 gold. There was no point putting the Iridium worth 3~4 silver in his bag, It was also the same afterwards.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

-You have discovered
Iridium!

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

-You have discovered
Iridium!

A curse naturally emerged. Normally he would've been happy to find Iridium. However, it was pointless when there was no room in his bag. It was to the extent that he felt like screaming. Ark ignored the overflowing Iridium and continued digging. After digging for 20 minutes, something started moving in the earth. Ark's eyes shone brilliantly at the sight. He threw the shovel and running like a savage beast to grab it.

“Pant pant pant! I-I got it!”

Ark shouted as he lifted his hands.

Pal pal pal pal. Pal pal pal pal.

It was a small and black bug with 8 legs. Beltana was a frigid planet with -50 degrees weather. But some life forms had adapted to this environment. Right now Ark was holding a bug similar to a cockroach. He didn't care about the name of the bug. No, he didn't know the name but he had often seen the bug when digging for Iridium. This bug was what appeared in Ark's mind when he was about to give up.

‘It is also a creature. And if it is a creature then it is possible to eat it!’

That was why Ark shovelled like crazy.

Pal pal pal pal. Pal pal pal pal.

The reason he caught it.....He hesitated as he looked at the black insect in his hand.....But Ark clenched his teeth tightly and shook his head.

‘No, I need to do this. If I die then I’ll lose 10 days’ worth of experience and a 5 star rated skill. Eating this guy is the only way to raise my satiety! After all, Space Food is also created from space bugs. This isn’t the time to hesitate.’

However, eating pork was different from eating an actual live pig. It was difficult to raise his hands and bring the bug to his mouth. But 13 levels! The special 5 star rated skill!

“Waaahhhhhhhh!”

Ark yelled and placed the bug in his mouth. And....munch, munch, munch, gulp!

“Eh? This doesn’t taste as bad as I thought?”

Close your eyes and chewed the string be swallowed down that blue arc eye and muttered. Ark muttered after closing his eyes and chewing.

-Satiety has increased by 5%.

“My satiety increased!”

The message was like a ray of light! It was only 5% but his satiety still increased. He had shuddered at the sight but the taste actually wasn’t that bad. And couldn’t he keep on finding bugs in the land? The motivated Ark started actively hunting for bugs.

“That’s it! I found a way to live! If I collect the bugs.....ouch!”

He suddenly experienced stomach pain! Ark grabbed his stomach and a message he never expected showed up.

-You have eaten unrefined food and received ‘Food Poisoning.’

<Health -50, Mental Power -100 and you will have a serious

stomach ache for 10 minutes>

* If you're hungry then don't just pick anything up and eat it!

“F-food poisoning?”

Sweat dripped down Ark's face as he muttered. The stomach ache was so realistic it was hard to believe he got food poisoning in a game. It was a pain that twisted his stomach. It was so painful Ark couldn't move for a while and just stood there dripping sweat! But Ark was more worried about the food poisoning than the stomach ache.

‘Ugh! In the end the bug wasn't edible after all.....’

He couldn't eat the bugs. It was like a death penalty for Ark. However, Ark realized there was no reason for despair.

‘Wait? I received food poisoning but my satiety was still increased by 5%. My health and mental power decreased after that but not my satiety. As long as my mental power and health doesn't reach 0 then I won't die. In other words, I can eat the bugs until my health reaches 0. And health can recover faster compared to the speed that satiety falls. My health also automatically recovers so isn't it worth losing some health to recover my satiety?’

The decrease in health meant he couldn't eat excessively. Because he could die from the food poisoning. However, he could raise his satiety as long as his health didn't fall to 0. And health recovered faster so he could still eat bugs to restore his satiety and not worry about starving to death.

‘The problem is the stomach ache.....’

He had found a way to live when he was on the verge of dying. But it hurt! It was enough to clog his breath! Was being afraid of the stomach ache worth dying?

‘Yes, that's it! There is only this! I can't be scared off by the stomach ache!’

Ark wiped off the sweat and started digging. His tearful struggle for survival then began.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

It was the intermediate Dig skill that he polished in Beltana! Every time the shovel moved through the frozen earth, a large pit was formed. If he saw any bugs squirming in the dirt then he would quickly snatch it and eat it!

-Satiety has increased by 5%!
-Food poisoning! Health -50, Mental Power -100, you have a stomach ache!
-Satiety increased by 5%.....you have a stomach ache!
-Satiety.....you have a stomach ache!
-Stomach.....stomach ache.....!

“Ohhh, not yet! Not yet! I won’t die from a stomach ache!”

He shovelled for 3 hours while suffering pain in his stomach! Ark managed to increase his satiety from 10% to 60%. He had to sit down for a while from the pain in his stomach.

“Phew, now I don’t have to worry about my satiety for a while.”

Ark slightly recovered from the stomach ache and got up. He had gotten over his starvation crisis. But it was too early to sigh with relief. There was still 290 km until he could reach the federation’s base. There was also a huge mountain blocking him.

“First I have to cross over the mountain and it will also take time to return to the base.....”

Ark looked at the mountain with a troubled expression. The mountain stretched to the left and right like a folding screen. He had no information

about the terrain so he was unsure about how far it extended. However, it was better to return by the shortest course even if there were some risks.

‘It is a snow covered mountain so my movement speed might fall.....’

Ark used the Swamp Walking skill. It was designed to walk on swampland but it still had some effect on snow. In fact, Ark had completely forgotten about Swamp Walking until not long ago. This was because Beltana was made of snow and ice so there were no chances to use the skill. However, he realized something after walking through the snow for a few days.

Puk! Puk! Puk! Puk!

The snow storm was raging at the time. His foot fell into the snow every time he walked. It was very inconvenient when trying to return to the base. He was thinking about how to increase his movement speed when Swamp Walking surfaced in his mind.

‘Snow and swampland are different but the same principle should apply. Although the Swamp Walking skill couldn’t be applied to the snow field.....the core of Swamp Walking is to remove any unnecessary power and to distribute his weight evenly. Even if I can’t use the skill, I can still apply the same principle.’

It was the right answer. He started to walk like he was just training in Swamp Walking from the Charenjok on R-14. It was the secret to how Ark managed to walk 150 km in two days despite the penalty to his stats when satiety fell below 50%. Everything was useful. He once again realized that truth. He was able to cross the snow by applying that point. Ark became resolute and started to climb up the snow covered mountain.

“Phew, it is like I expected.”

Ark took a rest and looked up at the steep incline. He had been climbing the mountain for 10 hours and it was considerable like he expected. Ice and snow covered the ground so if he was careless he would slip a few times. Plus, his

stamina and satiety were consumed more quickly than if he was walking on flat land.

“But this is nothing compared to when I was starving and dying.”

Ark had already reached the threshold of hell. Any experience would be trivial compared to that.

“Plus.....”

Ark smirked as he opened an information window.

-A new skill (Common Occupation ☆☆) has been learnt.

Steel Stomach (User, Passive): Sometimes you will unexpectedly encounter crises when travelling the galaxy.

The most common crisis situation is a shortage of food. There are places in the galaxy that don't have abundant food supplies. In that case, it is best to obtain the food from the local area. However, not all animals and plants in the galaxy are edible. Sometimes plants and animals that grow naturally in the environment are poison to the body of humans. Some will cause light food poisoning while some animal and plants contain deadly poisons that will cause instant death. But you don't need to worry about that. Pioneers who have received body coatings to adapt to the harsh space environment can gradually build up their tolerance by eating the food.

<You have built up an immunity to toxic food and can withstand mild food poisoning. A penalty won't be applied even if you receive light food poisoning. Digesting of nutrients has also improved and satiety will also increase by 3% when eating food>

He had been steadily eating the bugs despite the stomach ache. He ate hundreds of worms and received an unexpected skill.

‘Now I can put anything I find in my mouth and not have to worry about starvation.’

It was a 2 star rated skill but the value was terrific. It was a basic skill that would have great use in online games. However, he was just grateful he didn't have to worry about stomach aches anymore when eating the bugs. Unfortunately, the snow covered mountain contained less bugs. He could only find 4~5 bugs when digging for an hour. And his satiety only recovered by 20%. However, it was possible to maintain his satiety at 50% so he didn't need to worry.

“I can return! I just need to cross this mountain!”

Ark stood up and started to climb the snow covered mountain again. The snow storm wasn't enough to stop Ark's marching. And he finally reached the top of the mountain.

“Oh my god!”

Ark witnessed a sight that made him despair.

.....Cliff! There was a steep cliff on the opposite side of the mountain. First a mountain and now a cliff was blocking his return to the federation base. It was the same when he looked to the left and right. The cliff continued for dozens of metres in all directions without any gaps.

“Dammit, if I can't continue this way.....”

He had been climbing the mountain for 12 hours. He had also been digging until he felt like he was about to die. But what was the point now? Ark stared blankly at the cliff for a while before sighing and was about to return.

-You have received a feeble
electromagnetic signal.

The Nympe shone with a message.

“Electromagnetic signal? My Nympe received a signal.....?”

His Nympe was from the galactic federation. It couldn't receive a signal from the Rama. In other words, the signal was from the federation! He had

stumbled the other day on a signal from the Murat so that experience meant Ark couldn't ignore it. And there was a chance the signal was from the federation.

'It is 290 km from the federation base but there is a chance there might be a scouting unit nearby. If I join the scouting unit then I can return to the base.'

He checked and the distance also wasn't that far. Ark checked the Nymphe and followed the signal.

He was able to reach the signal place after moving for 30 minutes along the edge of the cliff. He found that the result came from the galactic federation. No, to be exact it came from the wreckage of one of the federation's bikes. While scouting this area, they had been destroyed by the Rama and the wrecked bikes were buried by the snow. The signal was a feeble request the bike had sent before it was destroyed. The radio wave wasn't transmitted properly due to the snow storm which was why Ark only received it once he reached the top of the mountain.

"Damn, do I have to dig again?"

Disappointed appeared on Ark's face.

"This is still the remnants of the federation. I might be able to find some supplies."

He removed the snow with the shovel and looked around. And he removed the remnants of the bike.

Once the bike that was broken in half was taken out, something fell near it. It was a circular object the size of a volleyball. It was a machine he had seen a few times on the base.

"Eh? Wait? Perhaps this is.....?"

Ark quickly took it out.

-Carrier MR-II (Galactic Federation Army's Common Specifications)

Item Type: General Communication Messenger

A common equipment used for communication by the galactic federation. There are two major types of communication used by the federation. Messages can be sent through radio waves or received directly. The Carrier MR-II is a messenger device that belongs to the latter category. When it is difficult to transmit radio waves thanks to terrain or hostile forces, an encrypted message can be entered into the Carrier MR-II and sent directly to the destination. The Carrier MR-II is designed to work in almost all types of environments.

<Input a message and GPS information in order to send the message to the destination>

Carrier MR-II! It was a basic equipment of the scouting unit. An ‘!’ appeared in Ark’s head as he confirmed the information.

“This is great! I can send a request for help to the federation base!”

The federation base was 290 km away. He didn’t know how long it would take to detour around the cliff. Despite being able to eat the bugs, there was no guarantee he could return alive. But what if he could ask for help from the federation base? If they used the bikes then travelling 290 km would just take 1~2 hours. If the Carrier MR-II arrived safely at the base and a scouting unit sent then he could be back at the base within 3~4 hours. And he could register with the Fairy! He didn’t need to worry about his experience and skills disappearing.

“Then I don’t need to take the difficult path.”

However, the Carrier MR-II wasn’t just a normal item. It was a military equipment. The Carrier MR-II had a security code so no one other than soldiers could use it. However.....

-This equipment is protected by a security device.

Enter the security code or use Invaders to hack and release the lock.

Attempt to hack? Y/N

Ark had the Invaders hacking program. The mini game this time was Brick breaker. It was a game that required delicate manipulation in order to break bricks with a small ball. He was trembling from the cold so thankfully the degree of difficulty wasn't that high. Therefore he managed to clear the bricks after 5 minutes! The security device was turned off and Ark immediately entered a message into the Carrier MR-II.

+ Urgent Rescue Request (Requester: Ark) +

I was stranded after the last battle and was wandering around in the snow storm when I came across the Rama base. I managed to escape from the Rama pursuers but I'm stranded on top of the snowy mountain 290 km from the federation base. I will enter the GPS information of the Rama main base and my present location.

* Rama's Main Base: X-@\$!#! Y-!#\$!#!

* Current Stranded Location: X-#@#### Y-#!#\$\$

-The professional encryption has been completed.

There was a reason he entered the location of the Rama's main base. Discovering the location of hostiles forces was a tremendous achievement. If he informed the base about the information registered on his GPS then he would still receive that achievement even if he died.

"Now go!"

He inputted the GPS location of the federation's base and started the Carrier MR-II. The sides of the Carrier MR-II opened up, emitted flames and flew off. But thanks to the snow storm, it flew at an incredibly slow pace. Of course, it was still faster than the speed that Ark could walk. In addition, it could fly over the cliff and crevasses without being blocked like Ark would've been.

“.....At that speed it should take half a day to reach the base.”

Now the problem was waiting until then. His present location was registered so he just had to wait for the rescue party. There weren't that many bugs on the snowy mountain but it wasn't a problem.

“I haven't been able to rest for 2 days. Because the game really catches people.”

Ark sighed and operated his Nymphe. He clicked the 'exit' button among the many icons on the screen and a message popped up.

-You have chosen to end the connection.

There were two ways to end the connection to Galaxian. One termination method caused the character to completely disappear from the game. However, this method was only possible in non-combat areas. If the connection was ended in the conflict zone then the character would remain in the game. If so the character could choose the 'Hibernation' state where the satiety, health and mental power wouldn't be consumed. The character also wouldn't be affected by certain environmental conditions as well as being immune to poison. If subjected to attacks from the enemy, the damage would be decreased but the character would still receive damage. In 'Hibernation state,' the unit would sound an alarm to let the user know their character was being attacked.

The system could be shut down using Hibernation State! In fact, this was one

of the difficult things about combat inside Galaxian. Other online games didn't have such a system and the character would disappear when exiting the game. Therefore some clever users would terminate the connection when surrounded by the enemy and not connect again for a few days. It was also possible to do guerrilla warfare using this method. It was pointed out that this was the main cause behind a breakdown of the balance in a 'prolonged battle.' However, Galaxian had a system where the character wouldn't disappear in a disputed area. It was a penalty but Ark was currently rather thankful for that system. If he entered the Hibernation state then he wouldn't need to worry about satiety decreasing. On the other hand, his character would remain in the game so he would be there when the rescue squad arrived. Ark moved to a proper position and pressed the end button.

"Hibernation state!"

Ark's eyes closed as he entered hibernation state.

"That's it. When I connect again then I'll be at the federation base."

And he was finally able to rest comfortably after 2 days.

His and Her Circumstances

-What am I.....I really.....

A tearful voice was heard through the telephone. Hyun-woo frowned and looked at the clock on the wall. He had stolen a bike from the Rama's base and then defeated his pursuers! The bike was broken in the process and he marched through the storm for two whole days. Not only did he receive physical damage, he was also mentally damaged from eating bugs and was very fatigued. Therefore Ark entered a Hibernation state after sending the Carrier MR-II and slept soundly. And ZZZZZ! ZZZZZ! He had fallen asleep around 11 p.m. And now the wall clock was pointing towards 3 a.m.

‘What on earth is going on.....?’

Hyun-woo had only slept for 4 hours so he couldn't understand what was happening. The person calling was his mother. His mother had miraculously recovered after a long struggle. It opened her eyes to a love for humanity and decided to go overseas to assist refugees. He couldn't understand why his mother was calling at 3 a.m. from South Africa. And she said something while crying the whole time.

‘It is clear that something happened.’

That was the only thing he understood despite his sleepiness. Hyun-woo suddenly raised his head as he recalled an old, painful memory and asked.

“Perhaps something happened to Father?”

-No, your Father is okay. But.....

“Then what is it? Please tell me slowly.”

-That....I'm sorry. It became like this.....

His mother sobbed as she stuttered. Hyun-woo became frustrated and sighed.

–Hyun-woo, it's me.

Then he heard the voice of his stepfather, Gwon Hwa-rang.

“Yes. What's going on? Why is Mother acting like that?”

–That, something difficult has happened.

“Something difficult?”

–It is about that land in the mountains that we previously bought.

“The land in the mountains? The piece of land that the An-gook hyung introduced to me?”

–Yes, I received a notification that the price of the land has suddenly fallen.

Hyun-woo's face tensed after hearing Gwon Hwa-rang's words.

“The land value has dropped? Is that why Mother has been crying on the phone? I, tell Mother.....it is normal for the land value to rise and fall. It is a lump sum so a small fall won't cause much difference. An-gook hyung also said that at the time. The price suddenly ascended so there is the possibility that it would fall slightly. You don't need to worry because it will rise gradually.”

Hyun-woo laughed and answered.

In order to explain, Hyun-woo had to go back 4 years. Hyun-woo's father died in a traffic accident and he had to borrow a lot of money to pay for his mother's hospital bills. He couldn't rest and had to run away trying to pay off the interest on the loan as well as the hospital bills. It became a habit to tremble over spending even 1,000 won. The situation changed 1 year after he started New World. Hyun-woo clung to money more fiercely than any other user and managed to settle his debt 2 years after starting New World. He spent 1 year as a consultant and 1 year as Global Exo's director. During those 2 years, he was able to steadily gather quite a bit of money.

“Now if you only get married then I don't need to worry any more.....”

At that time his mother started nagging.

“A man only becomes an adult once he makes his own home.”

“Mother, I’m now 26 years old. It isn’t that urgent at this age.”

“Not urgent? It’s not like you haven’t met any women. There is both Kang Mi-su and Hye-sun.....shouldn’t you definitely clear up your heart? While your heart is important, a woman will also decide to leave if you take too long.”

His mother said to him. At the time Hyun-woo had two females close to him. There was Kang Mi-su who was known as Lariette in New World and Park Hye-sun also known as Roco. Like his mother said, both of them were interested in Hyun-woo and he had a good impression of them. But a good impression didn’t mean a love affair. He had also never thought about marriage. At the time, marriage was just a distant thought in Hyun-woo’s future. And there was another part that weighed on his mind.

‘Alan.....’

Alan had been Ark’s biggest rival in New World! After the event triggered by Lucifer was put in order, Hyun-woo heard that Alan was in a coma. He would plunge a sword into him without hesitation in the game but this was reality. Hyun-woo and Alan didn’t have a good relationship but Hyun-woo felt somewhat responsible.

‘Alan has liked Kang Mi-su for a long time.’

That thought popped into his head every time he saw Kang Mi-su. His heart felt heavy and he became increasingly gloomy so he decreased their meetings. And she left to study abroad several months after he joined Global Exos so they lost contact. His budding relationship with Kang Mi-su had been stopped because she kept on reminding him of Alan. He belatedly though he made some mistakes but he still didn’t contact her. His relationship with Park Hye-sun lasted a little longer than that. But Hyun-woo couldn’t

stop thinking of Park Hye-sun as his little sister. So there wasn't any real progress between them. She also became known as a minstrel in New World and was contacted by a scout for an entertainment agency. Her schedule became busy after that and they barely had any contact now.

‘.....Well love is like that.’

Hyun-woo had to clean it up. Anyway, Hyun-woo's marriage was still far in the future. Therefore Hyun-woo entrusted most of his income to his mother after she left the hospital. At that time, his stepfather Gwon Hwa-rang and the members of his rehabilitation program Yoo An-gook made a proposal to him. That was the land in the mountains that Gwon Hwa-rang spoke about. Yoo An-gook was a real estate specialist nicknamed Bu Dong-san. Yoo An-gook heard that the price of the land in the Taek Mountains was going to climb soon so they purchased it. The government then announced that it was going to relocate their main government office there so there was a huge speculative frenzy over the land. But that speculative frenzy would eventually calm and it would fall to a more reasonable price. He couldn't think of a reason why his mother would be anxious. Of course, almost all of his fortune had been invested into the property so it was natural to worry.

“It was very high for a while so even a little fall wouldn't give that much damage. Father shouldn't worry so much. We're not selling it immediately anyway. It will go up again soon.”

–It's not like that.

“Huh?”

-The real estate price of the land in the Taek Mountains has fallen to 1/10 of the price over the last few days.

Hyun-woo was bemused by Gwon Hwa-rang's words. He was still tired and thought he was hearing nonsense.

“1/10th of the price? Is that a joke?”

–I want to believe that. But that isn't the case.

“T-then why?” How did it fall so much?”

–I don't know. At first I thought the relocation that the government announced was cancelled. An-gook was also baffled. The price didn't fall gradually but it was a sudden drop over two days. An-gook is trying to check with his contact but we don't know what happened at the moment.

“T-that.....”

Hyun-woo quickly got over his sleep. Like he said, Hyun-woo had left his money to his mother and she invested it into real estate. Hyun-woo had sworn to make sure his mother could live properly without crying. Therefore he sent 30~40% of his income to pay for his mother's expenses while she was overseas helping the refugees. Other than the money used to help the refugees, his mother invested the rest of Hyun-woo's earnings into real estate. Now that real estate had fallen to 1/10th of the price. That was 1/10th of the money had earned during the 4 years.

“Such a thing.....!”

Hyun-woo was about to exclaim angrily when he closed his mouth. He took a deep breath before talking in a calmer voice.

“I understand what you're saying. But you don't need to worry too much. I'll talk to An-gook hyung and we'll deal with the problem. I'm also a director in a large corporation. It doesn't matter if the money falls a little bit. Do you understand? Mother's health is the most important thing of all. I'll contact you if I learn more so please tell Mother not to worry. I believe in Father.”

–I know. And.....I'm sorry.

“We don't know yet. Father doesn't need to be sorry.”

He said and hung up. His mother's health was more important than a few pieces of money. This was true. However, even Hyun-woo couldn't be fine

after hearing such words. He disconnected the phone at 3.30 a.m. and by the time he finished his shower it was 4 a.m. It was still early but Hyun-woo got dressed and left his house. He took a taxi and arrived at Yoo An-gook's real estate office at 5. There were lights on in the office despite the early hour.

“Hyun-woo!”

There was a man smoking the cigarette inside the office. He was Yoo An-gook, also known as ‘Bu Dong-San.’

There were also 9 other people inside the office. The men clearly didn't look ordinary. If those men went out together as a group then their looks would cause the police to be called. The nine men were the ex-rehabilitation members. Hyun-woo had a good relationship with them but he didn't feel like smiling in this atmosphere. They had also bought land in the Taek Mountains like Hyun-woo.

“What on earth is going on?”

“Hwa-rang hyung-nim contacted you.”

“Yes.”

“Then sit down.”

Yoo An-gook asked as he looked at him with a haggard face.

“What have you heard?”

“The real estate has dropped to 1/10th of the price. It was fine a few days ago so why has it dropped so suddenly?”

“I also don't understand it either.”

Yoo An-gook muttered and sighed while sucking a cigarette.

“After hearing the news, I checked it and thousands of the land near the real estate we bought we sold at almost the same time. It was sold at 70% of the market price. A lot of land was sold within a short period. The people who

bought the surrounding real estate belatedly found out and hurriedly sold their land. They could only think that there is a problem with the land. That's why the value of the land suddenly dropped so much."

"That's why the price dropped to 1/10th?"

"The market price is 1/10th but....."

"There will be no deal at that price."

The ex-con artist named Kang Yoo-jin with the nickname Jjak-tung interrupted.

"There are rumours about the LTE class. They seemed to already know everything about the real estate. Those experts bought several pieces of land after the price fell to 1/10th. Therefore the actual sale was less than that number. In some cases it might become a dead land deal."

"Then....."

"It is tied up. Your money and my money."

"Our money."

Ma Chorung who was nicknamed Hae Gyeol-sa said towards Yoo An-gook. Then Kang Yoo-jin frowned and muttered.

"We listened to An-gook. An-gook said the value of the land is high so can we blame him for this situation?"

"He's not to blame."

Ma Chorung pouted with a dissatisfied look. Yoo An-gook could only sigh. Yoo An-gook stared at Hyun-woo for a while before saying.

"The situation has already happened. The fundamental cause is the sale of the surrounding real estate.....what is the reason? Why did the first person sell the land for 70% of the price?"

"I honestly don't know why."

Yoo An-gook scratched his head and took out a new cigarette.

“I ran around everywhere after getting the news. But the owners of the land are just there in name. Do you understand? The actual owners are separate.”

“Who?”

“You know, the price of the Taek Mountain land rose after the announcement from the government. Isn’t it obvious if they bought the property before the announcement?”

“They’re politicians.”

Kang Yoo-jin spat out in a rough voice. Yoo An-gook nodded and continued.

“That’s right. I also knew that the price of the land in the Taek Mountain would rise due to a contact. So I checked there when I knew there was a problem but I was blown off. I also think it is strange that the government office transfer was cancelled. Even if it was cancelled, there should be an announcement from the government. If they had broadcasted it for a few days then the price wouldn’t have dropped all at once.”

“A war isn’t going on right now.....”

“I don’t think it is a war that caused the value of the land to fall.”

Ma Chorung said. Then he shrugged when Hyun-woo and the other rehabilitation members looked at him.

“That’s right. When we went to see the land the other day, wasn’t there a nuclear power plant in the vicinity? Isn’t that the first place North Korea would aim missiles if there is a war? Look at what happened with the Fukushima nuclear plant accident. If the land becomes soaked with radioactivity then it would become worthless.”

“This bastard, are you joking?”

The rehabilitation members glared at Ma Chorung. But Hyun-woo felt like he had been hit in the back of the head by a hammer.

‘A nuclear power plant.....there was a nuclear power plant in the vicinity of the Taek Mountain region? Then perhaps.....’

A name floated into Hyun-woo’s head.

.....Lucifer! He was the strongest artificial intelligence created by the genius Park Woo-seong.

Once again, the reason Hyun-woo was struggling inside New World was because of Lucifer. Lucifer took advantage of his intelligence to take control of the nuclear power plant, causing the government to ask Hyun-woo to play Galaxian. Moon Ji-hun who was part of the emergency task force told Hyun-woo that Lucifer was threatening to blow up the nuclear power plant. If Hyun-woo played Galaxian then Lucifer would transfer control of the nuclear power plant back to the government.

‘Is that the reason?’

This was the government. He was too naive when thinking like a gamer.

‘Lucifer isn’t stupid. If he transferred control of the nuclear power plant over to the government then his weapon to threaten them would disappear. And Lucifer also knew about the existence of Park Woo-seong. If the government used Park Woo-seong to build a firewall then it would become difficult for Lucifer. So he wouldn’t hand over the control without a safety device. No, the nuclear power plant might not be the only one Lucifer seized. He might’ve ceded control of one nuclear power plant as a condition to me joining Galaxian but it would be simple for him to take control of other nuclear power plants.....’

And what if the nuclear power plant chosen was the one in the Taek Mountains?

‘.....All my questions are answered!’

The people who bought the real estate were the politicians who received the information in advance. If they were politicians then they could easily obtain

information about Lucifer and the nuclear power plants. Moon Ji-hun said it was a secret but that only applied to the ordinary residents of Korea. It didn't apply to South Korea's politicians. They could use that information to obtain more money. They joined hands to buy real estate and then sold it off in one stroke. This was a lucky secret unknown to 'ordinary people.'

'Those damn politicians!'

Anger welled up in him at the thought. These were the politicians supposed to be devoted to their country and its people! He really wanted to curse them and his mouth hurt from holding them back.

Now wasn't the time for it. The price had gone up considerably before that so selling it at 70% of the price wouldn't give them any damage. But Hyun-Woo and the rehabilitation members were different. Thanks to the politicians selling the real estate, the price had fallen to 1/10th of its value. And even if he was willing to sell it at this price, there was no one who would buy it. Hyun-woo realized this and looked at Yoo An-gook.

"Anyway, now we can't even sell it at 1/10th of the price?"

"That's right. We need to watch a little bit more."

"Then I can only wait and watch. Please contact me if you find any other information."

Hyun-woo said in a blank voice and got up. Yoo An-gook's eyes widened as he smoked his cigarette.

"Eh? Where are you going?"

"It's not too late. I can't just sit here."

"Yes, but...."

"I have some work to do today. Hyung-nims, I'm going to go. Ask me again after a few days."

"That brat, he still hasn't changed. Yes, I'll contact you if I find anything."

Kang Yoo-jin laughed and nodded. Hyun-woo murmured with an unpleasant expression after leaving the office.

“In fact, I hadn’t really felt the threat of the nuclear power plant.....”

It wasn’t like he thought it was okay. However, Hyun-woo was an ordinary citizen so he couldn’t really fathom the threat of a national emergency. However, the threat started to become real after hearing about the real estate. He couldn’t say it wouldn’t affect him anymore. If there was an explosion then Hyun-woo and the rehabilitation member’s land would become radioactive. And all the money he collected for 4 years would fly away. Money was money but he also couldn’t imagine the impact his mother would receive.

‘Now I have to use every possible method to stop Lucifer.’

It wasn’t for the nation. It was for his family and Hyung-nims. His determination was now very different.

‘Dammit, wake up! I can’t stay on Beltana forever!’

An irritated Hyun-woo took the taxi and returned home. An idea suddenly occurred in his mind.

‘Is there a way to figure out if Lucifer took control of the nuclear power plant in the Taek Mountains?’

“What is going on?”

Inside a spacious and luxurious office. The man didn’t even turn his eyes at the question.

“The real estate that my mother and I own was sold when we weren’t paying attention.”

The man frowned as the voice continued. He sighed and pushed aside some

documents before raising his head. A woman in her twenties was in front of him. She was wearing baggy jeans and a t-shirt. Her attire didn't fit in with the luxurious atmosphere of the office but she wasn't interested in minor problems like that. Her expressionless face that looked like a stone statue lessened her appeal. The man stared at her before asking.

“How did you know?”

“That estate is in my name and my mother's. Isn't it strange for me to not know?”

“You don't need to worry.”

“It doesn't seem like that. Almost all the land near it was sold at the same time. And the remaining land is worth 1/10th of its price so the people who own it must be shedding blood. I don't know why such a thing happened but it is huge. Fortunately my mother and I seem to be quite lucky.”

“If that is all you wanted to say then leave.”

“I intend to do just that.”

The woman turned around with a blank expression. The woman grabbed the door handle and paused for a bit before asking in a low voice.

“Why are you my father?”

The man frowned again. However, he soon returned to his original expression and replied.

“I need to work.”

“You do that.”

The woman left the room with the same expressionless look. However, many emotions came flowing onto her face as soon as the door was closed. Resentment, anger and helplessness.....she panicked. She didn't want to feel like that. So she ran away. She hid her real appearance and lived in a different place. In another world she named herself Irina.

Waking Up! (Part: 1)

“Eh?”

He strained his eyes. It had been 16 hours since he entered hibernation state.

‘I sent the Carrier MR-II so now I just need to wait to be rescued.’

He had sent a help request before entering the hibernation state. But he encountered a ridiculous situation in reality. The real estate where his entire fortune was invested had fallen to 1/10th of the price. If he couldn’t solve the crisis then the entire fortune he gathered for 4 years would fly away. He showed a calm appearance in front of his parents and Hyung-nims but inwardly he was feeling the complete opposite. However, there was still a solution.

‘The reason the land value fell is because Lucifer occupied the nuclear power plant.....’

Park Woo-seong said that Lucifer would definitely keep his promise. Ark also thought this.

Lucifer would keep his promise whether he won or lost. He wouldn’t randomly commit an act of terrorism. Ark was convinced of it like Park Woo-seong.

‘In the end, everything will be settled if I step on Lucifer in Galaxian.’

The situation hadn’t changed but Ark’s mental attitude had. It wasn’t somebody else’s problem anymore. He couldn’t leisurely explore and relax. Lucifer was somewhere within Galaxian. Right now he couldn’t do anything about that. Yet he still connected to his unit as soon as he entered his house. He connected.....

“Why am I in a place like this?”

Ark looked around with confused eyes. It was a rusty square room. An iron grille was attached to a small window on the rear wall and was also stuck on

a small window in the iron door. His hands were also cuffed behind his back.

“I.....I’m imprisoned? Why?”

Ark couldn’t understand the situation at all. He had requested help yet he was in a jail when he woke up from the hibernation state?

‘Someone must’ve changed my location while I was sleeping.....did the rescue squad arrive? So why was he stuck in jail? Wait? Hasn’t it been a fortnight since I was stranded? Perhaps they’re treating me like a deserter after having no contact for a fortnight? Is that why I’m in jail? But that shouldn’t happen. I discovered the location of the Rama’s main base so why am I thrown in jail? This is ridiculous.....’

Ark woke up and raised his body. He started tapping on the door and crying out in a loud voice.

“Hey! Is there anyone out there? Hey! Where is this place? Why am I shut in here?”

–He appears to have woken up.

Then he heard someone’s voice from behind him. The face that appeared in the small window.....

‘What, what the? This guy.....a Rama?’

Ark winced and retreated. The person who appeared in the grate was a Rama with dark skin and pointy ears.

‘The Rama clan?’ Oh my god! T-then I was caught by the Rama while in hibernation mode?’

Ark grasped the situation too late and fell into a state of panic. After he heard the voice, 2 Rama entered the jail. One Rama was a heavily armoured warrior while the other one was dressed lighter and had a backpack with a cross on the side. The Rama warrior sat down in front of Ark and began to talk.

–You fell asleep and woke up in the jail. You must be puzzled. However, you

won't understand even if I explain it. I'll explain the main subject simply. We brought you here instead of killing you because we wanted to ask you some questions.

“.....”

–It's no use pretending not to understand.

Ark's heart dropped at the Rama warrior's words.

‘What the? This bastard, how does he know I understand the Rama's language?’

The galactic federation and even the Royal Guards didn't know that Ark understood the Rama's language. So how could the Rama warrior know his secret? Did they do something while I was in hibernation mode? Ark thought suddenly. The Rama warrior laughed and tapped a machine like a hearing device in his hear.

–This is a translator that specializes in the language of the galactic federation. I know that you are hearing the federation language. Of course, your words will also be translated into the Rama language. So there is no reason to waste time pretending you don't understand.

‘.....Luckily it wasn't what I first thought.’

It was fortunate but he still couldn't be relieved. He was a prisoner of the enemy. It was impossible to think of that as a good thing.

–We recently had a small incident that occurred on the base. There's also a few bikes and soldiers missing. It was difficult to trace it through the storm but we saw evidence of digging when we looked around. We missed the signs for a while.....but we eventually found you. We also saw the light signal from the enemy communication so don't try to pretend it's not you.

Ark frowned after hearing those words. Leaving a trail of holes from digging was clearly Ark's mistake. He could've died from starvation so he hadn't

been worried about leaving a trail. He soon realized his mistake and covered up the hole after that. He also applied the method of Swamp Walking to move on the snow without leaving footprints. However, he ruined that by sending a signal which emitted light. The Rama warrior laughed as he saw Ark's confused face.

–It is like I expected. You don't have to pretend you don't know. Let's cut to the chase. Are you the one behind the missing soldiers?

'Is he stupid?'

Ark looked at the Rama warrior with amazed eyes. What crazy person would answer 'yes' in this situation? Ark held his tongue but the Rama warrior acted like it didn't matter and continued.

–If it was you then how did you manage to get past our defences and sneak into the base? Were you by yourself or did you attack with other colleagues? What about the main army? Do they already know the location of our base? Oh, and another thing. Does your GPS contain the coordinates of the federation's main base? If you give me the answer then I'll let you live. Because the chance to catch an enemy is rare.

This guy was stupid as expected. Handing over the GPS information of the military strong hold was like helping the enemy. Naturally he would receive enormous penalties. The penalty would be to the extent that he couldn't continue playing within the galactic federation. Of course, Ark hadn't registered with the Fairy yet so he would lose 13 levels and a 5 star rated skill. If he was killed then everything would be lost. But that would be nothing compared to the penalty received if he helped the enemy. If he didn't want to quit the game then obviously he couldn't answer. So Ark said something to them. It was an answer that often appeared in movies.

"Kill me."

It was regrettable that he would lose everything from the last fortnight but he

had to survive. There was no choice now that he had become a prisoner. He would lose a lot of things but luckily he had sent the Carrier MR-II with the position of the Rama base. If the federation won the war with that information then he would still receive huge achievements.

“I have to be satisfied with that much.”

-I told you. This is a rare opportunity. Killing you is too easy.

The Rama warrior smiled and got up.

–You now understand what I need to know. If you want to tell me then you should say it.

“Let’s see? I will tell you when the army comes.”

-You’ll see soon. Hey, Relief.

The Rama warrior shrugged and turned around. The Relief that the Rama warrior called pulled out a syringe from the backpack with a cross on it. Ark sensed something sinister as the syringe was plunged into him.

-You have received a highly concentrated nutrients injection.

<Your health and satiety has recovered by 50% due to the concentrated nutrients injection>

‘Eh? Nutrients injection? This guy, he is a medic?’

There was also a job similar to a healer in Galaxian. Some possible different jobs were a cleric or a medic. The cleric used a type of recovery magic while the medic prepared supplies and dispensed drugs. There weren’t that many clerics in Galaxian at the moment but there were quite a few medics. The Rama warrior smiled and said.

–I can’t let you die of starvation.

“Isn’t that a waste? That injection, isn’t it expensive?”

–It is worth it as long as I can figure out the base of the enemy.

“It is futile if you want me to tell you.”

–I said that you would see soon.

The medic then pulled out another syringe. The Rama warrior shook his head when the medic tried to give the injection to Ark.

–No, that’ll never work. He is a user. You won’t know but a user won’t be threatened by an injection like that. Instead.....yes, SMT-518 is good.

–Huh? But SMT-518 is.....

–My experience with users shows me that this is better than torture.

–If you say so.....then I understand.

The medic nodded and pulled out another syringe before sticking it in Ark.

–The special bacteria SMT-518 has been injected.

<In the case of a bacterial injection, a special effect will be triggered for 30 minutes>

“A bacteria injection? What are you.....heok!”

Ark was looking around doubtfully when he suddenly screamed. The moment it was injected, a frightful feeling spread from the tips of his hair to his toes.....

“I-it tickles! Ohit! Uk! Hak hak hak! Ack! I-I’m going crazy! W-what did you do? Ohit!”

A ticklish sensation started to spread around his entire body. Now Ark could understand what the Rama warrior meant. At first he thought the medic was trying to give him a pain causing bacteria. However, a user were different from NPCs and the game unit was able to adjust the degree of pain.

He would only feel a slight sting like static electricity when being horrifically

tortured. But other than pain, his other senses were 100%. The Rama warrior suspected Ark was a user after finding him in hibernation mode and ordered the SMT-518 injection. The itching sensation was even more horrible than pain. This was a type of pain that the unit's control device couldn't prevent. Besides, he was handcuffed so he couldn't scratch no matter how much he itched. It was a situation where he wanted to run and jump around. Ark never imagined something like this even when he was New World's advisor.

“Ohit! T-this bastard! Hihhi, stop it!”

–If you're happy then I'm happy as well. Are you going to speak now?

“Hak hak hak! H-how funny! Hik hik hik! Y-you bastard! Hihhi! I'll never leave you alone!”

–He hasn't had enough fun yet. It's okay. There is still a lot of time to change your mind.

The Rama warrior and medic left the room. He was about to say something to the medic when he looked at the jail and turned off the translation system. It was a behaviour to guard against Ark but Ark was proficient in the foreign language.

–He was in hibernation mode so there might still be others in the area. Troops are exploring the area. The troops moving from the other direction will join us tomorrow. We will wait until the troops accompany us before returning to the base. Don't forget to inject the SMT-518 every 30 minutes.

–I understand Captain-nim.

He heard all of their words through the grate. Ark's eyes shone while he rolled across the floor suffering.

‘Ohit! Return to the base? Hihhi! That means this isn't the Rama's central base!’

Ark had been in hibernation mode so he thought he had been brought back to

the Rama base. And escaping from the central base himself was impossible. With the medic there, he couldn't refuse to eat and starve to death.

'Even if the Beltana war is finished, I would still be a prisoner. Ohhhh! The Carrier MR-II contained information about the Rama central base but how the federation will handle it is still unknown. Hak hak hak! It might take a few days depending on the federation's response! I'm going crazy! I might even rot a few months in jail.'

Ark was anxious about that fact. SMT-518 was really difficult to withstand. He was in a state where he was being tickled and he couldn't scratch it. This wasn't something he could withstand with patience. In other words, the SMT-518 was more painful for users than torture. However, this was a game so the user had a way to escape any type of pain. It was to end the connection. He could enter hibernation mode and then exit the unit. The more fearful part was that he was stuck in jail.

He couldn't do anything. Level up, items.....he would just have to wait around even if connected to the game. Ark started Galaxian with a clear goal so this was the most dreadful penalty.

'Stupid.....'

Ark bit his lip. He should've thought that someone would've chased him after setting fire to the Carack's food and fleeing with the bike. But he couldn't consider it. He was so busy trying not to die of starvation every day that he couldn't think about anything else. He dug holes to catch the bugs and the Rama scouting troops eventually found him. The light signal that the Rama warrior saw was the second problem. His prisoner status was a result of Ark's carelessness. But it was too late to regret it.

'However, it is still too early to give up if this isn't the central base.'

Ark bit his lip against the maddening itch and organized his thoughts. If this was the central base then it was impossible for him to escape by himself. Based on the dialogue he heard, Ark was certain that he wasn't far

from the mountain where he entered hibernation. They weren't convinced yet that Ark was the criminal behind the event at the base. They thought his colleagues might be around and wouldn't return to the base until they searched the area.

'But they will return to the base after the search ends. Pant pant pant! According to the Rama warrior, that will be tomorrow. Kikiki! Once the unit scouting the circumference returns then we will head to the base. In the end I only have one day. If I fail to escape before that happens then I'll rot in the Rama's jail. I have to escape before then. Hek hek hek! That's not.....I have to look for a way to die!'

He was impatient thinking about it. But both his arms were handcuffed behind his back. He couldn't even pull out an item let alone escape.

'First I need to deal with these handcuffs.....'

Ark looked around desperately but there was nothing inside the jail. He was surrounded by thick steel walls. Yet he still had to find something. If he didn't then it was over. Ark twisted his body despite the itch and checked every corner of the jail. He finally saw a bent iron plate in a corner of the room. The iron plate's edges bent outwards.

'Hopefully this.....'

Ark approached it quickly. He placed the handcuffs on the edge of the iron plate and started scraping away. He was going to use the sharp edge as a hacksaw to cut off the handcuffs. However.....

Kkaduk! Kkaduk! Kkaduk! Jik! Jik! Jik!

He had only been enduring the itching and scraping at the handcuffs for 3 minutes. At first it seemed like the iron edge was working. Then despair appeared on Ark's face as he turned his edge.

'Damn! Why are the prison walls so weak?'

Iron powder was piling up on the ground underneath where he was scraping away at the handcuffs. However, the iron powder wasn't coming from the handcuffs. The iron powder was coming from the iron wall. The iron piece was being scratched away by the handcuffs. On the other hand, not one mark could be seen on the cuffs. This meant the material of the handcuffs was several times firmer than the iron wall.

'I made a mistake! I can't escape the handcuffs like this!'

Ark leaned against the wall with a blank expression and sighed.

'It would've been better to starve to death.....'

Ark thought as he absent-mindedly stared at the ground. Then an '!' popped in his head.

'Wait? The handcuffs are stronger than the iron wall?'

Ark looked at the small window where he could see thick snow and strong blasts of wind.

Of course, the window had an iron grille across it. It was red and rusty but there was no way to cut it without any equipment. But now Ark had an incredibly strong metal. The metal was strong enough to even grind down the iron wall.

'I can do it! It is possible with these handcuffs!'

Ark approached the window and placed his back to it. Then he started moving the handcuffs across the grille with as much strength as possible. Ark was using the handcuffs to scratch away at the window.

Kkaduk! Kkaduk! Kkaduk! Kkaduk!

He continued scratching against the grille for a while. At this point, Ark had been doing this for 10 minutes and managed to destroy one of the crosspieces. However that wasn't enough.

'I need to destroy at least 3 bars in order to escape through the window.'

He continued scratching at the grille with the handcuffs behind his back. His handcuffed wrists weren't perfect. The handcuffs tore the skin and caused blood to flow. However, Ark couldn't feel the pain thanks to the control device of the unit. The itch caused by SMT-518 transcended imagination. So it was difficult for him to sit still. However, the pain from scratching the skin actually reduced the itching. Now he could withstand it to some degree.

'I will escape!'

Kkaduk! Kkaduk! Kkaduk! Kkaduk!

Ark bit his lips and continued moving without any breaks. And he had finally separated the 2nd iron bar from the 3rd.....

-Eh? It is already this time. His spirit should've dropped by now.

'Dammit! Has it already been 30 minutes?'

Ark thought frantically as he heard a voice outside the door. The itching from SMT-518 was really intolerable. The duration of SMT-518 is 30 minutes. It was time to be re-inoculated.

'If the medic comes in then he will see the cut crosspieces! Dammit! Just one! Just one more.....'

Ark rocked his arm like crazy and scraped his flesh on the window. However, the crosspiece just wriggled side by side and didn't break easily. And.....

-I have to enter the injection even if he is in hibernation mode.

Cheolkeok.

The door was opened.

"The reply has come from the central government."

Inside the headquarters of the federation's base. A middle aged man with silver hair spoke in a low voice.

“Are they sending reinforcements?”

“No, the central government can’t afford to send any more regular troops.

Beltana’s garrison commander called Haman shook his head and explained.

“There are internal conflicts with the Aschulat while the federation is struggling against the Rama. Beltana is one of the most important and strategic planets left in the Bellin constellation. The federation is also being damaged by the Rama warrior nicknamed the Red Slaughterer. It is difficult for the federation to send more troops.”

“But this is an opportunity.”

“Of course. I’ve been waiting for this moment.”

“Then.....”

“Yes, I visited Marquis Martin who is a councillor of the central government through the Star Gate and explained the circumstances. It is hard for Sir Martin to send regular troops but offered to send some mercenaries to act on behalf of Istana. They will send 200 mercenaries by tomorrow.”

A bold smile appeared on Haman’s face.

“We will get 200 reinforcements tomorrow. The storm hasn’t completely cleared but we know the exact location of the Rama base so it won’t be a problem. We will march as soon as reinforcements arrive tomorrow. And before the storm clears up, all the Rama on Beltana will be exterminated.”

Haman looked at a young man with a satisfied look.

“This is all thanks to you. How did you get this information when there is a snow storm?”

“That.....”

“No, that’s okay. The results matter not the process. You brought the information to the strategy team so how you got it doesn’t matter. The most

important part of fighting on a disputed planet is to find the main base. Over the past year, numerous scouting units had been sacrificed and they couldn't figure out this information. This achievement will award you a silver medal of valour."

-You have earned 5,000 achievements for figuring out the location of the Rama base.

In addition, the Beltana garrison commander Haman has recommended you be awarded a silver medal of valour.

<When participating in battle on a disputed planet, acquiring special information that will lead to the destruction of the enemy such as the location of the enemy base will give special achievements. The medal of valour has significant meaning in the galactic federation and different classifications such as gold, silver and bronze will be awarded based on separate acts>

'Silver medal of valour!'

The young man's heart beat wildly. The silver medal of valour was the second highest medal!

If he received that then he could get ahead of other people! It would guarantee him success. The young man couldn't hide his thrilled expression. Haman smiled and raised his hand to his shoulder.

"You shouldn't be satisfied with this much. Like I said, we'll be able to drive those dirt aliens from Beltana once reinforcements arrive tomorrow. I will leave the 200 elite troops to you. You will have a large role in the battle and I have no doubt that you will win. Then you will be awarded a gold medal. Do you understand?"

"Please leave it to me!"

"You are reliable. Then please go. You also need to make some preparations."

“Yes, Commander-nim. Thank you!”

The young man saluted and went outside.

“The silver medal of valour, I never thought he would help me this way.”

The young man muttering was Valencia, the leader of the 1st armoured platoon. It was an accident that Valencia discovered it. Ever since Ark went missing a fortnight ago, the soldiers couldn't move due to the snow storm so Valencia's greatest pleasure was watching the Royal Guards waiting for Ark. On that day, he had been happily watching the Royal Guards sobbing near the Fairy. He discovered a flying object heading towards headquarters. Valencia realized it was the Carrier MR-II and intercepted it along the way. If something like that was sent to the defense base then it was highly likely to be sensitive information. Valencia just thought he would see a scouting report when intercepting the Carrier MR-II. It wasn't much but he could raise his achievements like this. However, the Carrier MR-II had more information than he expected. It contained the GPS information of the Rama main base! And the person who sent the GPS information.....

‘Ark! That bastard, he's still alive?’

Thoughts started turning over in Valencia's head. If he took the Carrier MR-II to headquarters then Ark would receive the huge achievements even if he wasn't here. And Valencia would be left with nothing. But now the Carrier MR-II was in Valencia's hands. Ark was also missing for a fortnight so he was treated as a deserter.

‘Can I download the data from this Carrier MR-II to my Nymphe?’

He could intercept the achievement! But there was a problem. If Ark returned then all that would be gone. If Ark returned alive then an investigation would be launched and the information was registered on Ark's Nymphe so Valencia wouldn't be able to hide the fact that he intercepted it.

‘But that is only if Ark comes back alive.’

If he died then all the information registered on the Nymphe would be erased. If that happened then there was no way to prove it even if Ark protested.

‘According to the message, Ark is currently stranded 290 km away from the base. He entered hibernation state to await rescue after sending the Carrier MR-II. If a rescue party isn’t sent then it will be difficult for him to return. But that isn’t enough. That guy definitely has to die. There is a Rama outpost near that mountain area. If that guy is hiding there then the solution is simple.’

Valencia inputted a new coordinate into the Carrier MR-II that Ark sent.

* Current Stranded Location: X-
#@### Y-#!#\$

The message was encrypted and the Carrier MR-II was sent to Ark’s location. Of course he didn’t just send it. He added one additional gift.

Flash, flash, flash, flash!

It started emitting light once it reached the destination. That was why the sleeping Ark was caught by the Rama. It was the light signal the Rama warrior was talking about.

‘If he is in hibernation mode then the Rama will 100% take him. If he hasn’t resurrected yet then he must’ve been captured alive. No, I won’t let him return alive.’

Valencia smiled meanly as he continued walking.

-The galactic federation has sent an emergency message.

Hired mercenary troops shall be dispatched to the disputed planet Beltana. All mercenaries who want to enter this war shall register with the

federation branch in each city by 18:00.

The message appeared on the Nymphe's of all the mercenaries on Istana. The central government was hiring mercenaries after the request by Beltana's garrison commander. The mercenaries.....

“Beltana?”

“Yes, that is where Ark is located.”

.....They received it as well.

Waking Up! (Part: 2)

Bang!

Just as the door was about to open. A roaring sound suddenly came from within the prison.

–Hik! What is that? That....eh? Eh eh?

The Rama medic surveyed the jail with confusion. One person was collapsed in a dusty corner of the jail. At first he thought the prisoner couldn't withstand the itch and committed suicide. But he soon realized something was wrong. The man collapsed in the jail was surprisingly.....

–Is he the same species? He is from the Rama clan.

The person from the federation had escaped from the prison and the Rama collapsed. The medic hurriedly rushed towards his colleague and asked.

–Hey! What the? Why are you here? Where is the one in jail? Where is he? Hey!

“Ohh! Who....you....Relief? The Relief?”

The Rama warrior moaned as he lifted his head.

–Yes, that's me. What is going on?

“.....I-I was struck.”

–Struck? By who? How?

The Rama warrior looked at the opposite wall after hearing the Relief's question. The Relief looked in that direction and stuttered.

–Heok! I-iron window? Don't tell me?

“Ugh.....I was searching around for the federation soldiers and found traces of some of them. And I tried to chase them but met the squad commander. It would take some time to track them so I was told to return and watch the

prisoner. While I was returning, I noticed the iron grille on the window and found the guy escaping. So a battle begun. Dammit, that guy used some strange technology and locked me in here before escaping.....”

–Oh my god! That guy ran away?

“Yes, we have to hurry. He couldn’t have ran very far yet.”

-Dammit!

The Relief jumped up. Then the Rama warrior shouted.

“You idiot! You’re a medic so how are you going to chase after him alone?”

–Then follow quickly! We have to catch up before he runs far away.

“Shouldn’t you release me then?”

The Rama warrior exclaimed angrily and turned his body. The arms handcuffed behind the back caught his eye. The Relief saw the handcuffs and asked.

-Eh? Why are you handcuffed?

“I don’t know! I woke up after being hit and was handcuffed.”

–Damn! This brat, now I have to release your handcuffs?

The Relief started swearing as he took out a key. He looked at the Rama warrior and murmured.

-Wait? You, what squad are you in? I’ve never seen a squad with a battle suit like yours.

“.....Sheesh!”

The lips of the Rama warrior twisted. He ran up and crashed into the Relief’s chest with his shoulder.

Tong-!

The Relief was pushed back several metres into the wall. The Relief couldn’t

grasp the sudden situation. The feet of the Rama warrior struck the Relief's wrist. It was a kick from the battle suit clad Rama warrior! There was a sharp pain in the wrist and the key flew away.

–Heok! T-the key!

The Relief exclaimed and stretched out his hand. However, the movement of the Rama warrior was many times faster. The pleasantly smiling warrior kicked the Relief in the stomach. The Relief couldn't even scream as it felt like he had been hit by a truck and fell against the wall. Meanwhile the Rama warrior rotated his body and grabbed the key.

–Ugh! T-that.....you.....who are you.....?

“Me?”

The Rama warrior started laughing. The handcuffs fell from behind the Rama warrior at the same time.

“I'm Ark.”

—————‘Dammit, it's the end!’

Just before the Relief entered the prison. Ark became gloomy while scratching away at the iron grille. He had already separated two iron bars. There was no way it wouldn't go unnoticed.

‘Damn, I was too short-sighted. I should've put on the battle suit when I started.....’

Ark had thought about using the battle suit. He used the battle suit when climbing the snowy mountain but it had been 18 hours since then. Therefore the battle suit was 100% charged. The battle suit increased his body's ability by 30% so he could easily get rid of 3~4 iron bars. However, not everything would be settled by just escaping the prison. The federation base was still hundreds of kilometres away and there were Rama scouting units in the area. Ark didn't want to abuse the battle suit excessively.

‘But that means nothing if I can’t escape from the jail.’

It was a mistake in judgement. He was in a desperate state when he heard the Relief opening the door.

‘Wait? Come to think of it.....’

Then something popped into Ark’s head.

‘After listening to their words, the squad commander isn’t convinced that I’m the only one who hit the main base. And they don’t know that I can use a Rama battle suit.’

It was impossible for the federation to use the Rama’s battle suit. If they knew that then they would’ve questioned him closely. In Galaxian, NPCs could also resurrect via the Fairy like users. So Ark had the idea of passing himself off as a Rama. But Ark was overlooking one thing. The snow storm hadn’t stopped yet.

‘The snow storm hasn’t stopped so the Rama can’t communicate with each other. It’s been two days since I killed them so the scouting warriors that I killed should’ve already revived. They are the only ones who know my identity. They can’t know that I was the one who stole the bike from the base or that I can use a battle suit!’

Then couldn’t Ark take advantage of the Rama battle suit in this situation? The Relief would have no choice but to fall in chaos.

‘But that’s not enough.’

Ark mixed in a few tricks. The conversation the squad commander and Relief had before leaving!

‘They don’t know that I can understand the Rama language.....’

Ark still didn’t understand why he was skilled with a foreign language. Thanks to the dialogue, Ark knew that Relief wore a communication device. He heard them talking about the scouting troops

enough to be able to fool the Relief. The iron bars were off the window. Of course, if the Relief thought calmly about it then there was no way for a person to squeeze through the two bars. But the Relief believed the battle suit and the scouting talk and became confused. Well, the Relief sensed something strange in the last moment.....

He was lucky. In the end the handcuffs were released.

“The effect of SMT-518 is no joke.”

Ark said as he took out the Impact Blade.

“I was rolling around the ground for 30 minutes. Now I’m going to repay the favour.”

–How....the federation....the Rama’s battle suit....

The Relief stuttered with an expression that indicated he didn’t understand. However, the Relief wasn’t stupid enough to not understand what was happening next. The Relief turned and tried to run out of the jail. And he tried to close the door and lock it! A blade squeezed through the gap in the door. It felt like a beast was shaking the door with its fangs.

–Ugh, no! I need to stop him somehow!

The Relief turned pale and pushed against the door with his body.

“Set Bullets Shooting!”

Cheolkeok, cheolkeok, cheolkeok! Pepepeng!

The door where the blade was stuck caught on fire. It was a shot fired from the Impact Blade. 3 bullets went through the door and entered the chest of the Relief. 3 bullets went flying! The Relief’s chest exploded and he flew back several metres. He raised eyes sick with fear as the iron door opened. Ark pulled out the long sword and went through the open door.

“Now, how shall I repay you? Huh?”

–Ack! Aaack!

The Relief screamed and pulled out a pistol. It looked like a trivial pistol so normally he would’ve just ignored it. However Ark had ignored the special grenade a few days ago and almost died because of the crystal prison. Therefore Ark learnt that he couldn’t ignore seemingly normal ammunition. This was the 24th century. How could he know all of the weapons that the aliens used? This was also a learning experience.

Peng! Syu syu syu syu syu!

Ark lowered his body and the ammunition hit the wall. A green gas appeared and the iron wall turned black. He didn’t understand it that well but the medic’s bullet seemed to have a chemical action. Even his shield would be ineffective against a gas projectile.

‘But it is still a bullet.’

Ark leaned forward and ran forward like a sprinter. His sword shot off a black light.

“Sonic Sword!”

The sword broke the sound barrier and hit the neck!

“Impact Shot!”

First the neck was bleeding and then bullets hit him.

-Headshot!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 150% damage>

The message appeared as the Relief was shot. At this point the battle was as good as finished. As a medic, the Relief was someone specialized in healing.

He was no match in a 1 on 1 fight against the warrior Ark. The bullet pumped an unidentified gas but it was a special type of gun that only fired one shot. They had to reload the ammunition every time it was fired. Ark was a close combat specialist and wouldn't give the enemy that chance. The Relief changed to a bloody rice cake once he closed the distance and used gun, sword and kicks. In the end the medic gave up on the gun and pulled out a syringe like weapon but the result was still the same.

-Achievement
+ 80.

The Relief was converted into achievements. When he defeated the Rama warriors he had obtained 120 achievements for 2. The Relief was a special occupation so it gave more achievements despite being lower levelled than the warriors. But now wasn't the time to be happy.

"The rest of the Rama scouting units will arrive back tomorrow. But I don't know when the squad commander will return."

He could see that the squad commander was a considerably high levelled Rama warrior based on his armour. He couldn't check using the Infrared Scope but he could guess based on the equipment. He was at least level 50 or more!

"I can't guarantee my victory if I face him....."

Either way, this place was enemy territory. It was wise to avoid fighting with the squad commander if victory couldn't be guaranteed. However, even if he was in a hurry! Even if there was danger! He couldn't just leave like this.

"This is a Rama outpost. There might be something worth money."

Ark looked around with greedy eyes. The first thing that caught his eye was

the monitor on a desk. A small memory stick was plugged in and a map appeared on the monitor. The map showed a mountain with red dots and lines drawn on it.

“This mountain is.....this is the mountain I entered hibernation mode on. And if I use this map.....clearly this shows the position of the scouting units!”

This information was as valuable as gold because Ark could use it to avoid the scouting unit!

“Damn, the OS of my Nympe.....”

The data of the Rama was compatible with the federation’s system. Therefore Ark had no choice but to memorize the map.

“Is there any other information I can use?”

He manipulated the keyboard and other information appeared.

-!#\$&#@##\$!caeQdDf1! qolq!#\$
%!#\$\$%!

However, it was just letters that he couldn’t decipher. He could understand the Rama’s language but he couldn’t read it. There were also some photos of a giant robot shaped like a strange ostrich.

“I don’t know what it is but I might be able to get some achievements if I bring it back to the base.”

Ark took out the memory stick and placed it in his bag. And again, again and again. Ark rummaged through the room anxiously before he was finally able to find it. It was a box of supplies appropriate for the outpost.

“What is this? A-amazing!”

Ark’s eyes turned to gold as he stared at the box. Inside the box were basic supplies like Space Food, various ammunition and a large number of recovery ampoules. Fortunately Ark.....

“W-wait? Heok! This is a big deal!”

He screamed and grabbed his head. He belatedly realized that there was no room in his bag. It was full of the Zaliman ore he picked up in the pyramid. Apart from that, Ark also had 5 Space Foods and two boxes filled with 50 Fire Bullets when he left the pyramid. He had ran out of food and used all the Fire Bullets so he only had a limited amount of space. It wasn't enough to pack all of the items in the supplies box.

“Ohhh, I can't grab all these items when they're so close to me!”

But his bag wouldn't become wider no matter how he thought about it.

“It can't be helped. I'll just pack the items that are expensive like the Zaliman ore.”

Ark had to compromise with the supplies box.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku!

He then heard the familiar sound of an engine outside the window. Ark automatically turned and looked out the window.

‘Dammit! That bastard, he's already returned?’

The storm was blowing wildly but he could confirm that one bike was returning. Ark confirmed that it was the previous Rama warrior. It was a sudden return but Ark didn't panic. At first he had thought it was better to avoid fighting him if possible. However, he changed his mind after seeing the map on the monitor.

‘Looking at the map, there are only several areas where it is possible to cross the mountain. But those areas where the ones filled with a lot of red dots that indicated the scouting unit. The only road not blocked by the scouting unit was the one back to the base. If I'm not here when the Rama warrior returns then he will definitely look for me. It will take more than a day to cross the snowy mountain so I'm bound to get caught. It will be even more difficult if

they use bikes. It is better if I dispose of him here.'

Anyway, having the element of surprise might be better. But Ark had another reason for being determined to fight. He had confidence that he could win against the level 50 enemy. The reason for his confidence was something that he found in the supplies box. He became certain of victory once he obtained 'that.'

'Yes, I can't just run away like this.'

Ark smiled and muttered. After a while.....

—Relief, that federation guy.....

The Rama warrior entered when he suddenly flinched and closed his mouth. The door of the jail was hanging half open. His expression was rigid as his eyes looked over the scattered furniture and bullet marks. And in the middle was the bloody Rama medic! He could understand the situation immediately. The prisoner had escaped while he was away!

—What is this? What? What on earth happened?

The Rama warrior shouted with a puzzled voice.

Dulsseok! Dulsseok!

The bloodied body of the Relief started shaking. The Rama warrior ran up and touched the Relief.

-Relief, hey Relief, what happened here? That guy? Where is that guy? Relief!

The Rama warrior realized that the shaking of the Relief's body was strange. But he thought the Relief was just taking a breath. However, there was no energy in the body of the Relief. His temperature remained as cold as ice. The body was unmistakably a corpse. Even if the Infrared Scope wasn't used, it was possible to see that it was a corpse with one glance. However, the body was shaking! Shaking! The Relief's body continued shaking.

–What, what the? H-how come? What’s going on.....?

The Rama warrior stuttered at the bizarre phenomenon. Meanwhile, the Relief’s shaking had become even more intense. At first it was just squirming but then started bouncing like a freshly caught fish. Then the Relief seemed to have reached his limit and the chest split open. Then something red tackled the Rama warrior. It was a red shape that broke through the Relief’s chest and ran at him.

Tong-!

There was a heavy impact sound. The Rama reflexively took out his sword and retreated a few steps with concentrated eyes. And.....his face was dyed with surprise. The red form was a dog covered with blood. A dog had appeared out of a corpse. However, the more amazing thing was the dog’s face. The body was unmistakably a dog but the face.....

–R-Relief!

The dog’s head had the face of the Relief! A dog with his face had rushed from the Relief’s corpse.

-U-unbelievable! What? What on earth is this? H-how.....?

The Rama warrior was in a state of shock after seeing a scene similar to a horror movie. Suddenly he felt a pain in his back. The Rama warrior fell to the ground with surprise. He opened a gap of 3~4 metres and saw an incomprehensible scene. A Rama warrior was standing next to the open door? A monster that appeared from the corpse and an unidentified Rama warrior!

–You.....

“You are indeed worthy of being a squad leader. Your reaction rate is quite good?”

–This voice is.....how did you get a Rama battle suit.....?

“Your senses are also quick. That is praiseworthy. Although you probably can’t understand what I’m saying.”

The unidentified Rama warrior. No, the man inside the Rama battle suit just laughed. Needless to say, this was Ark clad in the battle suit. And he was the reason for the hell hound with the Relief’s face! Just before the Rama warrior arrived, Ark had used Rune Carving and sacrificed the corpse of the Relief to summon the hell hound. The Rama warrior naturally didn’t know any of these details. Of course, the Rama warrior wouldn’t be able to understand without the interpreter even if Ark explained it. But the reaction was immediate.

–Armour armament!

The insect like armour appeared and wrapped around the body of a warrior. The battle suit smoothly fused with the shoulder and wrist.

‘That movement isn’t normal.....it is clearly a close combat battle suit. Plus.....’

He discovered the Rama warrior was level 52 through the Infrared Scope. This was the highest levelled Rama warrior that Ark had ever faced. He also wore a close combat battle suit. He probably won’t be easy to fight. However, that was only if the warrior could fight properly.

–I don’t know what you’re thinking but I’ll make you regret it.

The Rama warrior walked closer. And he tried to swing his sword!

–Heok!

The Rama warrior suddenly stopped. His body started twisting and he tried to look at Ark.

–You, heok! Y-you bastard.....ohhhhh, what did you.....hak hak hak!

“It’s finally kicking in.”

Ark laughed and raised ‘it.’

-SMT-518 (×5)

Item Type: Injection Drug

A refined drug made from a fungi that causes an intense itching sensation. In Galaxian, there are some planets infested with fungi that can cause various skin diseases. SMT-518 is a drug developed to treat one of these skin diseases. Patients with a bacterial skin disease show excellent improvement when injected with SMT-518. But if given to someone without a skin disease then it will cause uncontrollable itching as a side effect. This is a pharmacist medicine. It is difficult to abuse the drug.

<Used to treat skin diseases>

* Those without a fungal skin disease will experience excruciating itching for 30 minutes.

This was something he found in the supplies box. It was the SMT-518 that the Rama warrior used to torture Ark! While the Rama warrior was withdrawing from the hell hound, Ark who was hidden behind the door quickly injected the SMT-518. This was the identity of the sting the Rama warrior felt.

–Heok heok heok. Y-you bastard....Kik, ack! D-dare.....

“Do you want to die? Is it painful?”

Ark knew better than anyone the effect of SMT-518. It was so ticklish that he wanted to tear his flesh off. Anyone who experienced it personally would sweat at the thought. It also lasted for 30 minutes. He felt like dying while scraping away at the iron grille with his handcuffs.

“You can’t understand but I’ll give you some friendly advice.”

Ark leisurely took out the Impact Blade and muttered.

“I am Ark. I’m that good a guy to not return everything done to me. Now that

I've returned the favour.....”

–Hak hak hak! Y-you bitch! I'm going to kill you!

The Rama warrior panted as he tried to run up to him.

“Hell hound, go!”

Kong kong kong! Kong kong kong!

Saliva dripped as the dog ran up to the Rama warrior. The Rama warrior who was concentrating on Ark was bitten on the ankle. However, there was no time for him to scream. He had neared Ark before the hell hound bit him.

“.....Now I will return it with interest! Set Bullets Shooting!”

Cheolkeok, cheolkeok, cheolkeok! Pepepeng!

-Headshot!

<You have inflicted a serious blow and the enemy will receive additional 150% damage>

The message appeared after the Rama warrior was shot. Then it fell completely into Ark's pace.

The Rama warrior was level 52. He was 8 levels higher than Ark. He was also a Rama squad leader so he had great skills. However, the most important thing in close combat was concentration. Since close combat had a distance of 1~2 metres, one single moment of carelessness could lead to defeat.

“Sonic Sword! Impact Shot!”

Ark was concentrating.

–Hak hak hak! S-sword way....ack! Hik hik hik!

But the Rama warrior couldn't concentrate. It was impossible for him. Ark also knew this. He knew what SMT-518 felt like. It was like hundreds of hands were tickling every corner of his body! No matter how much he tried

to endure, it was impossible for his body to not spasm. No human would be able to concentrate in such a situation. And it wasn't just the SMT-518.

“Dog, go! Go! Go!”

Snap! Snap! Snap!

The hell hound was 1/3rd the level of the sacrifice. The Relief was level 30 so the hell hound was only level 10. The hell hound couldn't do any real damage. However, biting the Rama warrior's ankle was enough to stop his movements for a bit. The itching and biting wouldn't stop!

‘I would be having a hard time if fighting directly.....’

Now the Rama warrior was a mass of bleeding flesh. The Rama warrior was in a critical condition while Ark had only lost 30% of his health. The result of the battle was already confirmed. In the end, the Rama warrior was in a desperate state and screamed.

–Kuack! Dammit! This bastard, I'd rather just die! Ack! Hik hik hik!

The Rama warrior was covered with blood, tears and a runny nose. He really looked pitiful. So Ark said fondly.

“You don't like it?”

Ark had suffered for 30 minutes in the jail. Ark was the type to always pay back a grudge with interest.

“You are a warrior. Exert your power a bit more. Do you understand? You suddenly want to die? Don't lose courage so easily. A miracle might happen if you don't lose courage. Hang in there.”

Ark's encouragement caused the Rama warrior to try and attack again. After 15 minutes. The Rama warrior was almost dead and Ark's battle suit only had 5% mana left.

‘Should I finish this now?’

“18 Barrage!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The fists of the Hyper Drone poured out indiscriminately!

-Achievement +
100.

The Rama warrior finally died and received the achievements. The Rama warrior was thankful to Ark for granting his wish and went to heaven. Anyway, the battle suit disappeared after 18 Barrage and the hell hound was also unsummoned. The hell hound melted down and the smears of flesh disappeared.

“The sight of a dog emerging from someone’s flesh with their face is disturbing but the 5 star rated skill is quite good.”

The results were satisfactory.

“Now, shall I start working earnestly?”

Ark whistled and approached the supplies box. He poured his bag full of Zaliman ore into the box. Some messages had appeared after he took the SMT-518 out of the supplies box.

-Achievement + 7.

<If you capture supply items from the enemy then you will receive additional achievements>

He was given achievements for obtaining the enemy’s supplies. Therefore Ark emptied his bag into the box and packed all the supply items.

-You have seized the enemy’s supplies box and gained 322 achievements.

Killing the two warriors chasing him gave 120 points, the medic and Rama warrior respectively gave him 80 and 100 points. And obtaining the supplies box gave him 322 more achievements. That was a total of 622 achievements! If he combined it with his previous achievements then that was a total of 1,870 points.

‘Besides, the items can also be used!’

But sadly he couldn’t take all the items. Ark once again dumped out all the Rama supplies in his bag. He gathered the minimum food and bullets needed for survival. He then combed through for the expensive items and packed it in his bag along with the Zaliman ore. Ark discovered an unexpected item while he was doing that.

Mana Battery Pack (×2)

Item Type: For Mana Charging

A battery pack used to increase the mana charging rate of the Rama’s battle suit. If the battery pack is operated then the mana charging speed of the battle suit will increase. This effect only applies to the Rama’s battle suit.

<It will restore 1,000 mana within 30 minutes>

‘There is an item to quickly charge the battle suit?’

When thinking about it, the federation battle suits also had a battery to restore their energy. It was impossible for the Rama to not have an item like that.

‘The batteries for the federation’s battle suits are expensive so this should be equivalent to that price.’

Of course, this battery was exclusively for a Rama so he couldn’t sell it in a federation area. But he had no ideas about selling it. The Rama battle suit was an essential item for Ark. He went back to sorting the items. The health

recovery ampoules were also expensive so he filled 25% of his bag with them. The remaining 75% spots left were filled with Zaliman ore. He looked at the heaped up items but there was no more time.

‘I have to cross the snowy mountain before the scouting unit returns!’

He had to live and return. That was Ark’s main priority. He exited the building and it was a bunker disguised as a snowman. It was 300 km from the federation’s base. It was slightly further away from where he entered hibernation state but there was a relatively gentle slope in front of the bunker. This was one route to cross the snowy mountain.

“Although I experienced some difficulties, I got some achievements and items as a result. I also inputted the location of the Rama main base into the Carrier MR-II! At first I thought it was unlucky but now I seem quite fortunate.”

Ark laughed at the thought. Ark didn’t know that Valencia had snatched the Carrier MR-II. He had received the 5,000 achievements and silver medal of valour meant for Ark. But it was better for him not to know. If he knew then he would probably die from the shock. The snow storm that had lasted for a fortnight also weakened. The long storm was coming to an end.

“Did you check?”

An old man asked with a nervous expression. Another man with a huge body and dark face shook his head.

“They all told me the same thing.”

“Did he really desert the army?”

“I don’t know whether he really deserted but it has been a fortnight since he returned.”

The huge man sighed with an unpleasant expression.

“He went through quite a bit of trouble in the meantime. This is a disputed planet and I’ve overheard enough to know what type of treatment the prisoners received.....that guy’s situation is the same. The prisoners seemed to be bullied by the regular troops. Some prisoners were so desperate that they gave up.”

“Oh my god! Those difficulties.....”

The old man sighed with a tearful expression. The large man looked at the old man for a while before asking.

“What do you think?”

“Huh? What did you say?”

“That guy. He was a prisoner so his situation was serious. If he couldn’t endure then he would give up. Actually, that is true for quite a few prisoners. But this is that guy. Would that guy give up so easily?”

The old man wiped his tears with a handkerchief. And he shook his head with disapproval.

“No! He is not that type of person!”

“I thought like that as well. We know better than anyone that he won’t give up so easily. Both the regular troops and prisoners spoke badly about him. They suggested that he had been bullied. I can’t believe their words. And there are also some people that talked differently.”

“People who talked differently?”

“Do you know the female officer in charge of the prisoner’s supplies, Irina? I don’t know why but she is the pretty female with a cold expression. Anyway, she said that he was bullied for a bit but he had been doing quite well recently. I also got the same results from the prisoners who followed him.”

“The prisoners who followed him?”

“That guy had prisoners following him and calling him Hyung-nim. I heard

those prisoners are now in a difficult situation after he disappeared. Because that guy was the one who obtained food, the prisoners are starving to death.”

“Starving to death? He gave his food to them?”

“Yes, that’s right. Anyway, this isn’t a problem that we can interfere in. I went to look for those prisoners and they talked a lot about their Hyung-nim. They believe it is impossible that he gave up.”

“Then they think.....?”

“He’s still alive somewhere.”

The huge man touched his beard and answered.

“He was missing as soon as the storm started. He might be isolated somewhere because of this storm. The communication won’t work and he couldn’t request any help. That is the most persuasive answer right now.”

“If that is true.....then how can we help?”

“If communication is interrupted then the best way will be to search but.....”

The man looked at the weather before continuing.

“We came here because we have a contract. We can’t possibly act independently.”

“That’s right.”

The old man replied with a sigh.

Wiiiiii!

–Everybody gather! All prisoners, mercenaries and troops gather at the square in front of the base. All troops need to gather in the square by 14:00 so that equipment can be checked and supplies distributed. I repeat. All troops.....

Sirens started ringing and a voice was heard through the loudspeaker.

“It has started. We should go.”

Both men headed towards the square in front of the base. The soldiers soon gathered at the square after hearing the broadcast. There were 400 regular soldiers with the mark of a spacecraft around a blue planet, 100 people wearing the garb of the prisoners and 200 mercenaries sent from Istana.

“Everybody listen up!”

A loud voice was suddenly heard.

“200 years ago, our forefathers left for the frontier to ensure the survival of the human race. They were able to conquer numerous hardships and finally built a new home in the Milky Way galaxy. But the history was never calm. Our enemy is obvious! It is dirty Rama aliens who made a mess of our galaxy! Our ancestors have a long history of blood shed with the Rama. And we are still encountering them on a large number of planets.”

The garrison commander of Beltana stared at the soldiers with blazing eyes.

“We can’t forget about the blood shed by our ancestors! We have to shed blood to protect our children and grandchildren. Now we’ve finally got a great opportunity.”

But Haman’s eyes looked at the young man next to him. The young man was the leader of the 1st armoured platoon Valencia! Haman looked at Valencia with a trusting expression and said.

“I don’t doubt Valencia’s loyalty. Despite the snow storm, he somehow managed to discover the location of the Rama’s main base. We can finally end the long battle!”

“Waaaaahhhhh!”

“Hooray for Platoon Chief Valencia!”

The regular troops cheered after Haman’s eloquent words. Haman raised his fist and shouted.

“Now proud soldiers of the galactic federation, let’s head to our victory. Our victory on Beltana will be the starting point to drive the Rama out of the Bellin constellation!”

“Waaaaahhhh! Let’s go!”

“Let’s get revenge on the vile Rama!”

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku!

There was a ponderous engine sound and 5 large Memeod advanced forward. Dozens of bikes surrounding the transport and the mercenary squadrons followed behind.

All of the vehicles had the same navigation coordinates.

X-@\$!#! Y-!#\$!#!

It was the coordinates of the Rama base that Ark had sent. The final decisive battle for Beltana was going to begin.

Touching Reunion

-Roaaaaaar!

On a frigid snow covered mountain. 10 bikes were descending down a relatively gentle slope. It was the Rama clan riding die to side in a steady formation. The Rama warriors were wearing white armour and camouflaged with the snow! The snowy mountain was 'The Border' between the Rama and the galactic federation and they were the Rama scouting unit positioned there. Their main duty was to intercept any scouting units from the federation. But right now their purpose was different.

-Stop!

The bikes were descending the slope. The lead Rama warrior raised his arm and shouted. All of the bikes stopped moving and gathered around him. The Rama warrior looked around at the other members and said.

-Did you find any traces of him?

-I found some marks along the way. But all of them are considerably in the past. The last mark I found ends 1 km away from here.....

-He seemed to have crossed the border a long time ago.

The Rama warrior bit his lip at the words. The situation didn't seem that good. A few days ago, they heard the Carrier MR-II that belong to the federation and increased the patrols around the border.

When they found a signal light and searched the perimeter, someone from the federation was found in hibernation mode.

'He might have something to do with the incident at the base.'

That was easily guessed. Therefore the squad commander of the scouting unit captured the enemy and brought him to a bunker for questioning. And other scouting units started searching the area for anyone else. After completing the

reconnaissance mission, they had returned to the bunker one day ago.

‘Meanwhile the squad commander and medic.....’

Looking at the context, it must’ve been caused by the one locked in jail. The base was attacked by the federation but there was no traces of a trail. And how did that guy who was handcuffed escape from jail? Moreover, the prisoner even managed to kill the Rama warrior and the medic. But that wasn’t the main problem at the moment.

‘The important thing is that he managed to escape!’

And it was highly likely that guy knew the location of the Rama base. If he managed to return to the federation base then they would now its position. He had to stop him no matter what it took. He had to kill the guy to delete the GPS information recorded on the Nymph.

–Catch him! It’s been 18 hours since we left the bunker. He escaped on foot so it is possible to catch up!

The Rama warriors immediately got on their bike and chased after the prisoner. However, they reached the other side of the border and still couldn’t find him. And on the other side of the border.....

–It has become more difficult.

The Rama warrior looked around with irritation. There were a lot of cliffs so the places to move were limited. The other scouting units were also searching near the bunker and the border. It was an area that 10 units could search effectively. However, that changed if the prisoner had crossed the border. Extensive plains unfolded beyond the border. Finding one person in a place like that was like finding a needle in the desert. The escapee was heading towards the federation base but it would’ve already been over if they knew the location of the base.

-Vice squad commander-nim, what do we do now?

–As long as there is the possibility that he knows the location of the base, we can't give him up. The situation on Beltana will become dangerous if they get their hands on that information. We have to stop it somehow!

–Then.....?

–He's moving on foot so he couldn't have gotten very far even if he crossed the border. It should be a maximum of 20 kilometres. So the search area will be set at 40 km. We will split into three and move in the 9, 12 and 3 o'clock direction. If we can't find him then we will change the direction of the search to 10, 1 and 4 o'clock. There is a snow storm so we should eventually find a trail.

-Understood.

Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The engines of the 10 bikes roared and shot forward. The snow gradually subsided as the bikes moved into the distance.

Shake, shake, shake.....byong!

A pile of snow nearby started shaking and the head of a person emerged.

“Heh, those fools. They still don't understand the situation?”

The person was Ark who the Rama scouting unit were looking for.

“Don't you know those movements are completely obvious?”

Ark crawled out of the pile of snow and laughed. However, Ark still wasn't safe. He might've escape from the bunker by killing the medic and Rama warrior but there are still scouting units roaming around this area. Many of the scouting units had to return to the bunker within 24 hours. The time they left the bunker was unknown so they could return after 10 hours or 20 hours.

‘But if they have to return by tomorrow then they wouldn't be back in the next few hours. If I find a proper route then I can cross the snowy mountain in 10 hours. They have to return to the bunker within 10 hours so if I cross

the snowy mountain then I don't need to worry about being caught.'

There was just one problem. The area beyond the mountain were endless plains of snow. It wasn't easy to find a person in that place. However, that only applied when there was a distance.

'There is 10 hours between us but they will be riding bikes. They can catch up in 30 minutes by riding the bike. And I will be easily spotted if they get within a few kilometres and there will be no way to escape. In that case.....'

Ark took out an item. It was something now indispensable to Ark, the shovel!

'.....Hide!'

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

Ark dug a hole in the snowy mountain. He entered the hole, covered it up and used the Withdrawal skill to hide himself. The scouting unit couldn't spot the hiding Ark and moved far away. Of course, they weren't chasing him blindly. They divided into 3 groups and searched in a systematic method. No matter what direction Ark escaped in, he would've been caught by the net. However.....

"I already heard everything you stupid bastards."

It was the reason he was hiding in this location. The path through the snowy mountain wasn't straight. But that changed once the mountain ended and the snow fields began. He couldn't escape blindly so he had to work out some strategies. This spot was what he came up with when thinking of a strategy! It wasn't accidental that he overheard the scouting unit.

"Huhuhu, the biggest mistake is that you didn't know your opponent is Ark."

In fact, Ark was also astonished by the change in himself. Ever since starting Galaxian, Ark had been making successive mistakes. First he broke his dagger on R-14 and then he was entangled with a criminal hamster and got arrested.

‘Am I really Ark?’

He understandably had this thought. However, that situation changed little by little after coming to Beltana. At first his hopeless situation continued on Beltana but he slowly managed to escape and began to regain his previous self. His rusty head was slowly being cleaned. His head was slowly going back to its previous state. He was Ark of New World!

‘Yes, this feeling. I had forgotten for a while.....this is who I am. This Ark.’

Beltana was the worst environment that Ark encountered. This worst environment wasn't only in the game. His real estate property had suddenly fallen to 1/10th of the price. If an accident with the nuclear power plant really occurred then his real estate would fly around. The real estate price wouldn't go up unless Lucifer's threat disappeared. If he thought about it like that then Lucifer's threat extended to reality.

‘I have to do something!’

Ark's sleeping survival instinct woke up thanks to the situation in reality.

“Anyway, I can't stay in a place like this forever. There is a limit to this battlefield. If I can't escape from my status as a prisoner then I can't go any further. And it isn't necessary to speak about Lucifer.

So I can't waste time being captured.”

Ark looked around with gleaming eyes. He had already perfectly grasped the movements of the scouting unit. He could sneak out of their search network.

“First I need to fill my stomach.....”

Snap! Munch, munch, munch.

Ark inserted a bug into his mouth and chewed it. Ark had collected 20 Space Foods from the supplies box but he was still eating the bugs. The reason was simple. It was in order to raise the skill proficiency of Steel Stomach through experience. If he ate the bugs then he could increase the proficiency of Steel

Stomach. But it wasn't that easy to raise. No matter how many bugs he ate, the degree of proficiency only went up by 1. Furthermore, he couldn't catch the bugs everywhere. And Steel Stomach only helped with insects that gave lethal doses of poison. He needed the maximum amount to raise the skill. It didn't feel good eating the bugs but it helped his mental growth so Ark endured it.

-Achievement +
100.

-Satiety has reached 100%.

His satiety was full just by eating 6 bugs. Steel Stomach also gave an extra 3% satiety with every food eaten.

-Distance to the galactic federation's
base: 243 km.

"Now the remaining distance is 243 kilometres....."

He hadn't even travelled half the distance from when he first left the pyramid. If he travelled 70~80 km a day then it would take 3 more days to reach the base.

"But the snow storm is dying down. Communication will soon resume."

If communication was resumed then he could use wireless contact if he was within 100 km. He would be able to request help from the base. In other words, the base was only 140 km away and he could get there in two days.

'Yes, the next two days! That's no problem! I can return alive!'

Ark energetically stepped forward. Of course, he was still being pursued so he couldn't be careless. The snow storm was dying down. Therefore he would leave footprints in the snow. However, he had already found a way to solve that.

Sasasasa! Sasasasa!

He distributed his weight like he was walking on a swamp! At first he applied this skill to prevent from slipping on the snow. Once it was used steadily, an unexpected information window appeared.

-A new ability has been added to the 'Swamp Walking' skill.

Some skills have special 'secrets' that can be acquired. This secret can be obtained when the skill reaches intermediate level or the user realizes there is another application for it.

You have applied Swamp Walking and mastered walking on snow.

+ Snow Walking: Your movement speed when walking on snow can increase if you apply the same principles as Swamp Walking.

<The restrictions on the snow has decreased and the evasion rate has increased by 10%>

* You won't leave any footprints when walking on snow.

He gained the additional ability Snow Walking! That was how Ark was able to leave no traces when walking over the snowy mountain. The problem was it consumed his stamina.....

Snap! Munch, munch, munch.

There were plenty of bugs so it wasn't a problem. He chewed on the bugs like it was popcorn and walked through the snowfield. He calculated that he had been walking for over 30 hours since escaping from the bunker. Sometimes he would become dizzy with sleepiness but Ark bit his lip and persisted. In the meantime he had travelled 90 km. He had probably already escaped the Rama's search net but he couldn't be careless. Ark had been captured when he entered hibernation state. He couldn't guarantee his safety if he rested in a place like this.

“Pant pant pant, there is 150 km left. Damn, it is still far away. Pant pant pant, but if I travel 50 more kilometres then I can send a request for help. Pant pant pant! 10 more hours. I have to somehow hang on until then!”

Ark fought with his sleepiness and looked at the Nymphe to confirm the distance. Suddenly a blinking icon on his Nymphe caught his eye.

“Eh? This? Why is it reacting in a place like this?”

Ark clicked the icon with a bewildered look.

-New GPS information has been entered.

A message he couldn't understand rose in front of him.

“How wonderful.”

Valencia smiled as he looked around. Enormous armoured vehicles were advancing behind him. 5 Memeods were advancing forward while surrounded by dozens of bikes! It was the federation army marching towards the Rama base.

“If this surprise attack succeeds then the Beltana war will end!”

Valencia wasn't just glad that the war was ending. After being sponsored by the galactic federation, he had been appointed as the leader of the 1st armoured platoon on Beltana for around two months. In the meantime, Valencia had raised his income quite a bit from users sent to Beltana as prisoners. He couldn't be happy about the war ending since he would lose his extra income.

“But that will change if I become a distinguished person.”

The best person who led the army to victory on a disputed planet! Needless to say, the rewards would be colossal. Furthermore, this would be the first

victory over a disputed planet since Galaxian was commercialized. In other words, he could become the first war hero. A hero! It was a word that indicated a user who grasped money and honour in both hands. And it was 90% confirmed that Valencia was the main character with all the glory.

‘The remaining 10% is anxiety that Ark will revive.....’

Valencia looked at the bikes moving around busily and smiled. The 1st armoured platoon on the bikes had a secret order to directly execute the deserter Ark. Then he would be 100% confirmed as a hero!

“It was worth being sent to a planet like this.”

Valencia murmured while smiling with satisfaction. Then a bike approached him.

“Platoon Chief Valencia.”

Valencia’s face shone as he turned his head.

“Hoh, it is unexpected for you to initiate a conversation with someone. Do you like me?”

“I just had nothing to say to others.”

The woman who answered with an emotionless face was Irina. She was the military officer in charge of distributing supplies to prisoners.

“Then you must have a reason to talk to me.”

“Will they be left in that situation?”

“They.....”

A cold laugh emerged from Valencia’s mouth and he winked at Irina. Behind the advancing Memeod were 10 people painfully walking. They were breathing harshly and staggering while walking. They were Ark’s Royal Guards.

“What’s the problem?”

“Why are they the only ones walking instead of riding on the Memeod?”

“There is no more room on the Memeod. You know that we mobilized all of our troops. The mercenaries also joined us. Some of them have their own transportation but others have to take the Memeod.”

“I’m aware of that. I’m asking why they of all people have to walk.”

“What are you implying? The core power of this mission is the regular troops and mercenaries. Marching would consume their stamina. Isn’t it natural for the prisoners to walk?”

“But they haven’t even eaten properly. Some of them are starving and have probably reached their limit. If they have to march hundreds of kilometres in that state then they will collapse before arriving at the battlefield.”

“Then so be it.”

Valencia replied with a grin.

“We can’t have weak soldiers on the battlefield.”

“Are you deliberately trying to kill them by making them march?”

“Is there such a thing? Like I said, there is no room in the Memeod. It is my duty to only bring soldiers in the best condition onto the battlefield.”

“But there are still some spaces on the vehicles of the mercenaries. If you ask them.....”

“Let’s see. I’m not a storyteller. They weren’t willing to do it.”

The Royal Guards didn’t find it that funny as they examined the vehicles. In fact, there were no vacancies in the Memeod but room could be made for 10 people. But Valencia made the Royal Guards walk. The Royal Guards were Ark’s subordinates. If left alone then they could adversely affect the prisoners paying Valencia money for protection. Valencia felt he needed to make an example of them.

“If you’re so worried about it then you should give them some food.”

“That....it is against the regulations.”

“Indeed.”

Valencia burst out laughing. Irina frowned at Valencia’s attitude. Pedro who was a member of the 1st armoured platoon then approached on his bike.

“Leader-nim, an accident has occurred in the rear.”

“Accident?”

“Yes, one of the mercenaries’ vehicle has fallen into a hollow and can’t move. It looks like the vehicle will need to be repaired. The mercenary members aren’t enough to pull it out of the hollow so they request the support of 10 extra soldiers.”

“10 soldiers.....”

Valencia looked at the gasping members of the Royal Guards following the vehicles.

“This should be suitable labour for them.”

“This really is terrible.”

Mellin sighed with a gloomy face. They had been dying of starvation ever since Ark and his food supply disappeared. And they only had 40% satiety when mobilized for the mission. However, they were pulled onto the battlefield without being given any food or allowed on the Memeod. While the other soldiers were resting in the Memeod, the Royal Guards had to waste their energy walking to the battlefield. Therefore their satiety had fallen to 25%. Cupa who was part of the Tobil Clan was gasping with every breath.

“Now we have to do the difficult task of pulling this truck out of a hollow.....”

Valencia had given the task of pulling out the truck to the Royal Guards. They sighed at the sight of the huge truck stuck in a hollow in the middle of the snow field.

“That bastard, does Valencia want us to drop dead?”

“It can’t be helped.”

Mellin muttered with no willpower.

“Valencia has become the leader of the regular troops thanks to his achievements while we are just prisoners. If we disobey him then won’t we be penalized even more? This won’t change even if we go onto the battlefield. Valencia is in command so we will just be shields for the bullets. We’ll either die from starvation or being hit by bullets.”

“Dammit!”

Berad bit his lips and spat out curses.

“This is all because of Hyung-nim.....”

Hegel murmured as he lowered his head. Someone in the crew flinched and turned at the voice.

“What did you just say?”

“Hyung-nim.....Hyung-nim did it! Why? Did I say something incorrect? Isn’t it right? Valencia is annoying us because he disliked Hyung-nim!”

“You’re saying that now? Did you forget what Hyung-nim did for us? Did you forget that Hyung-nim just handed out food to us while we were fighting with the other prisoners for even one piece? Huh? Now you’re blaming Hyung-nim for Valencia’s harassment? What type of person are you?”

Berad shouted as he grabbed Hegel’s collar.

“But.....he is gone.....”

Tears flowed from Hegel’s black eyes.

“We had a great time with Hyung-nim. I was forcibly drafted here but it was fun. I hoped that we could someday return to Istana with Hyung-nim. I was going to ask Hyung-nim if I could still be his subordinate when we leave this place. I’m willing to die if it is for Hyung-nim. But.....but.....Hyung-nim deserted us.....”

“You idiot! You’re becoming upset because of Valencia’s words. Hyung-nim wouldn’t abandon us!”

“Then why hasn’t he returned? It has been a fortnight since Hyung-nim disappeared. But why?”

“T-that....”

Berad stuttered with a puzzled expression. After a while he sighed and retreated. The other members also held their tongues and sighed with heavy expressions.

“Hey, you guys! Why are you chatting for so long?”

Then a rough voice was heard from the rear of the truck. A huge figure covered in fur and smoking a cigar approached. His eyes surveyed the spiritless Royal Guards and he clicked his tongue.

“Sheesh, you look exactly like a zombie.”

“Are you the leader of the mercenaries?”

“Yes, I am the leader. Are you Mellin?”

“Yes but.....how do you know my name? Did Valencia tell you?”

“I will give you a detailed explanation later. Let me do a staff check first. Hegel, Kalliben, Beleol, Berad, Ralph, Cupa, Hedro, Reben, Konsed and Mellin. 10 people right?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“It is like that guy said.”

“Huh? That guy? Platoon Chief Valencia?”

“Sheesh, we wouldn’t follow a despicable child like that platoon leader. Anyway, the main force is quite a distance away so we can get started.”

The leader of the mercenaries approached the truck.

Buaaaang! Kukong! Totong!

Suddenly the truck released some fumes and quickly got out of the hollow. The eyes of the Royal Guards popped out at the unexpected situation.

“T-the truck that fell into the hollow.....”

“Bah, this truck carried dozens of tons of metal parts through swampland for several years with no problems. It is impossible for the truck to get stuck in a hollow like this.”

“T-then why?”

“Get in. We’re going somewhere.”

The leader opened the container of the truck. Then 20 mercenaries poured out and thrust the Royal Guards into the container. The truck then raced over the snow at a breakneck speed. The Royal Guards were uneasy but they sat down opposite the mercenaries. The truck clattered on for 1 hour.

Kiiiiiii-!

There was a sharp noise and the truck stopped. Then the door of the container opened and the leader’s voice was heard.

“We’re here. Everybody get down.”

“Where are we? Where did you bring us?”

“Don’t worry about it. You’ll understand once you get off.”

The mercenary leader laughed and replied. With a bandage covering one eye, the man gave off a bloody impression. It was a face that couldn’t be trusted but they couldn’t just stay inside the container. Mellin and the Royal Guards

got off the container with a worried expression. They looked around restlessly until they saw someone standing 10 meters away. It was getting dark so the sunset was obscuring the face of the person. The members looked at him with confusion.

“U-unbelievable!”

Kalliben suddenly let out a scream.

“What’s wrong? Do we know him?”

“Hyung-nim? That guy.....is Hyung-nim! Ark hyung-nim!”

“Ark? Ark hyung-nim? Such a thing? It is impossible. How could it be Ark hyung-nim?”

“I didn’t tell you?”

The mercenary leader smirked and spoke with a sly expression.

“I know that guy from before. He was a prospective member of the Silver Hand.”

The large man blowing out cigar smoke was Clem. He was the head of the government recognized Silver Hand.

Let’s return to several hours ago.

“H-how did my GPS catch this here? And the distance is 50 km?”

Ark looked at the Nymphe with a confused expression.

-You have received the GPS signal of the mercenary group Silver Hand.

<Present location of the Silver Hand’s truck: 53 km in the north east direction>

Surprisingly the Nymphe had caught the GPS signal of the Silver Hand. Before Ark was sent to Beltana, he had been tricked by a wicked hamster and hired out to the Silver Hand mercenary group. But unlike his worries, the Silver Hand was a surprisingly decent mercenary group. Ark worked hard and was able learn various basic combat methods from Clem. He also cultivated a strong relationship with the Scavenger Heksu and could learn miscellaneous information. He had spent a fortnight with them. Meanwhile, his intimacy with the mercenary group became high and Clem inputted the GPS data of the truck into Ark's Nymphe when their contract ended. But this was Beltana. The Silver Hand was supposed to be on Istana. Yet the GPS said they were 50 kilometres away?

“Is the Nymphe broken again?”

It was an uncomfortable thought. However, he decided to try communicating with them.

–This connection ID code.....Ark! Oh my god! Is it really Ark?

“This voice is? Leader Clem-nim?”

–That's right! Ark! What on earth happened to you?

“That doesn't matter. Why is the Silver Hand on Beltana?”

–We accepted the galactic federation's request and were dispatched to Beltana. We don't really are about things like this but we heard that you were sent to Beltana when we dropped by the city. Heksu and the other members were in an uproar once they heard and couldn't understand what happened. Well, well.

“That is.....”

–That's okay. You don't need to say it. Obviously it is because of that hamster. That damn hamster, I knew this day would come eventually.

“But why did the federation dispatch the mercenaries?”

–Ah, of course you wouldn't know.

Ark was then told what happened on the federation base. The garrison commander Haman found out the location of the Rama base and asked for reinforcements from the central government of Istana. However, they don't have enough regular troops and decided to dispatch mercenaries to Beltana.

“Then the Carrier MR-II that I sent arrived.”

–What? What does that mean?

“I found the location of the Rama base. And sent the information.”

Ark explained how he managed to find the Rama's base before sending the information with the Carrier MR-II he found on the snowy mountain. Then Clem continued in a puzzled voice.

–I never heard anything like that. I asked the Beltana soldiers about you and didn't hear anything about that. I heard that you've been missing for a fortnight and was labelled as a deserter. The garrison commander announced that a soldier called Valencia was the one who found the location of the Rama base.

“V-Valencia?”

Ark felt like a bomb had exploded in his head. What happened.....it wasn't necessary to think hard about it. It was impossible for Valencia to find the Rama base while there was a snow storm. Then the answer was simple. The Carrier MR-II that Ark sent. Valencia must've obtained it before it reached the headquarters of the federation base. And he downloaded the information from the Carrier MR-II before disposing of it. It wasn't surprising when considering that the soldier was Valencia.

‘Valencia of all people.....’

–Something smells dirty.

Clem murmured in a suspicious voice.

–If it is true then he can't get away with it.

Of course Ark wasn't going to let him get away with it. He was going to do everything possible to smear Valencia.

–If you die then there is no way but if you return alive then you can reveal the truth. The contents will be stored on your Nympe so an investigation will clearly show the truth. But that is only if you return alive. Fortunately you're only 50 km away so you can join us quickly. That is the most imperative thing.

'I have to return alive. That is definitely the most imperative thing right now but.....'

Over the past fortnight, that was Ark's foremost goal when wandering through the storm. However, his objective wasn't to simply 'survive.' Ark was eating bugs to stay alive so he wouldn't lose the experience and Rune Carving skill he obtained from the pyramid. In other words, he needed to survive to register with the Fairy. However, the federation had mobilized all their troops and were advancing towards the Rama base. It was likely that the Fairy at the federation base wasn't working anymore.

'Although I have to join up with them.....'

Valencia was currently holding all the power among the main body. Valencia had intercepted the Carrier MR-II that Ark sent then his return would be the most dangerous threat to him. He would use any excuse to kill Ark. On the battlefield, there were no soldiers who wouldn't kill while obeying the commander's order. And he was just a mere prisoner.

'If I join then I will die!'

The Carrier MR-II could lead to his death. However, that only applied if Ark joined up with the main force. His Steel Stomach meant he could survive on Beltana alone. But he couldn't let Valencia be seen as a hero.

'If the federation wins the war then Valencia will be hailed as a hero. The

investigation might not proceed if I protest afterwards. I need to find some way to reveal Valencia's injustice. I need to find some way before Valencia becomes a hero.'

Then something popped into Ark's head. Ark was lost in thought for a while.

'I have no choice but to try it!'

"Captain Clem-nim, I have a request."

—Say it.

"There are 10 prisoners who follow me like I'm their Hyung-nim."

—Yes I heard that as well. Valencia and his platoon members have been bothering 10 prisoners.

That bastard. That guy called Valencia. His actions were expected. He felt sorry because he had forgotten about the Royal Guards for a while.

"Can you somehow separate my younger brothers from the group and lead them here?"

—Separate? But an appropriate excuse.....

"I have an idea."

That was to have the Silver Hand's truck fall into the pitfall. It would be impossible for the Silver Hand to advance with the main army. Then Clem requested additional help while the other soldiers continued marching. And the prisoner unit were the useless soldiers. Valencia had been bothering the Royal Guards for a while. The situation proceeded like Ark planned. And finally.....

"Hyung-nim!"

The 10 Royal Guards stampeded towards him.

“Hyung-nim, you’re alive!”

“We thought Hyung-nim was dead.”

“So we waited day and night in front of the Fairy!”

“What happened? Where have you been in the meantime?”

The Royal Guard members surrounded Ark and fired questions at him.

“Stop, stop, I can’t answer all your questions at once. You see.....”

Ark who was surveying the depressed face of the members flinched and closed his mouth. Hegel was standing behind the other members while dripped tears.

“Huk, I....I really thought Hyung-nim had deserted us and wasn’t returning.....”

“You brat, is such a thing possible?”

Ark patted Hegel’s head and looked at the other members of the Royal Guards. It was obviously with one glance that they had no energy and looked like zombies. Ark didn’t bother to ask how much they suffered while he was away.

Korururu. Korururu. Korururu.

The stomach of 10 people started growling.

“It’s no joke. We’ll talk later so fill your stomach for now.”

Ark handed out the Space Food he obtained from the Rama’s bunker. The famished members shoved the food inside their mouths. Seeing the members looking so happy also eased Ark’s mind. And he placed a bug in his mouth without thinking. Hegel gawked at Ark with surprise and asked.

“Hyung-nim, what are you eating?”

“Huh? Oh, this? It’s a bug. Why, you should know. It is a bug often found when extracting Iridium.”

“Hik! W-why are you doing something like that.....?”

“In fact, I ran out of food while coming here.”

Ark laughed and tried to explain the process he went through to obtain Steel Stomach.

Muff-!

Hegel’s mouth dropped open while chewing the Space Food. It wasn’t just Hegel. The other members were also looking at Ark with shock.

‘What? Is seeing me eat a bug so shocking?’

Ark became embarrassed and scratched his head.

“Ohhh! Ohhh! Ohhhh.....!”

Hegel moaned and started crying even more.

“Eh? What happened? Is eating a worm so terrible?”

“Horrible....that’s not it. Ohhh! Hyung-nim ate bugs despite having food....it is because of us. You knew we would be starving if you met us again and ate the bugs while leaving the food for us.....ohhh!”

‘Eh? What are they saying?’

“Ohhh! We didn’t even know.....Valencia kept on saying that Hyung-nim deserted us and I blamed you....I, I.....”

They had completely misunderstood Ark. Of course, it was true that he worried about the Royal Guards. His heart actually hurt when he saw the shabby forms of the members. But....Ark wasn’t the type to sacrifice himself and starve for other people. However, there was no need to talk so bluntly. It was wiser to leave their innocent dreams intact.

“These children, I’m fine. I told you. We are comrades.”

“Hyung-nim....waaaaah! Hyung-nim!”

Hegel embraced Ark and shed heavy tears. The other members also shed tears like a fountain and flocked around Ark.

“I won’t doubt Hyung-nim at all now!”

“If Hyung-nim commands me to jump into water or fire then I will do it without hesitation!”

“I would give up the rest of my life for you!”

-Mellin’s loyalty has increased by 200.

-Hegel’s loyalty has increased by 200.

-Berad’s loyalty has increased by 200.....

The loyalty of all the Royal Guards increased at the same time! It wasn’t just the Royal Guards.

“That Ark, he really is a good person.”

Clem smoked his cigar with moist eyes. Heksu also looked at Ark with admiration and murmured.

“That big fellow. What would it be like if he was my successor.....?”

“He also willingly did all the dirty tasks.”

“It is good that we came here to help.”

-Intimacy with Clem has increased by 100.

-Intimacy with Heksu has increased by 100.

His intimacy with Clem and the Silver Hand also rose. The atmosphere increased thanks to the excited feelings from the Royal Guards and the Silver Hand.

“What will you do now Ark? We managed to sneak away but if we don’t return soon then we’ll be punished. Did you have an idea when you told us to leave the main force?”

Clem asked once the atmosphere was calm.

“Of course.”

Ark smiled and replied.

“From now on, we’ll become a detached force.”

“Leader-nim, I have an urgent report!”

At the headquarters of the Rama’s main base. A warrior shouted with an urgent expression.

“The scouting unit that we sent out to investigate the incident at the base has returned. While trying to capture the federation soldier that escaped, they found the federation army moving along the border. They number approximately 600~700. There are 5 Memeods and dozens of bikes and vehicles. It is a lot more troops then we previously judged was on Beltana. It is clearly an all-out attack by the federation army.”

“What, what the?”

The Rama commander jumped out and exclaimed.

“Dammit, was that fire really caused by a federation scouting unit?”

The federation had rallied all their troops and advanced. The region around the mountain was 100 km. If they rallied all the troops to bypass the border then they clearly knew the location of the main base. If they’ve already

started to bypass the border then there wasn't a lot of time to prepare.

“To happen at this time.....if it was a few more days then Beltana would be ours.....”

“Perhaps our plan was leaked to them?”

“It is still unknown.....”

The Rama commander raised his head and shouted.

“It is clear that our base will be attacked. We have to stop those guys before their heavy weapons close in on the base. Adjutants, quickly gather all the troops in front of headquarters. Wake up anyone in hibernation mode! All necessary troops except for the engineers will gather to prevent the advance of the federation army. The limit is 10 km away in area T-23. No matter what kind of sacrifices we make, we have to stop them for 3 days until our plan is complete!”

“I understand!”

Wiiiiiiing!

Sirens rang across the Rama main base.

Unauthorized Attack

Tu tu tu tung-!

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

Hundreds of metres were covered in smoke.

“Multiple smoke bombs!”

“The smoke screen contains a component to stop photoelectric light. The infrared scopes are jammed!”

“The influence of the magnetic waves won’t even allow biometric scanning!”

Shouting came from everywhere. Valencia bit his lip and exclaimed.

“Put away any vision correction devices! The enemy are the Rama, not space monsters. It will be difficult to survive while depending on mechanical devices on the battlefield. Remove all vision correction equipment except for the optical filter and wait for the command to attack. Their offensive will start soon.”

Then the smoke screen flickered simultaneously and hundreds of shadows appeared within it. Monsters with sharp arms like knives approached through the snow field. They were the biological weapon of the Rama, the Carack.

“Shoot!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Hundreds of guns fired at once. Hundreds of bullets, grenades and warheads fired, causing swirls of smoke and flames. The Carack became full of holes like a honeycomb and collapsed. However there were no signs of the Carack decreasing. And they moved on battle instinct so they didn’t feel fear.

Karararara! Kararararak!

The Carack just climbed over the stacked corpses. Once the Carack started their assault, the federation army became wrapped in confusion. Several soldiers were hacked and mangled by the Carack's sharp arms. But Valencia's face was still confident.

“Those guys intend to push forward. They want to overwhelm us with their numbers. But impatience will bring misfortune on a battlefield. Pedro!”

“Yes, Leader-nim. Start!”

At the same time, dozens of smoke trails were fired. The smoke reached dozens of metres into the sky! They simultaneously exploded and hundreds of splinters flew from the sky like rain.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa, kwa kwa kwa kwa!

An area several hundred metres wide shook and dust flew up. It was the aerial attack weapon Claymore that fired hundreds of metal splinters! Unlike ordinary bombs, this once exploded in the sky so it was difficult to avoid. Thus it was known as the Devil's rain! The Claymore showed overwhelming destructive power.

Kara.....kararara.....

Once the swirling smoke and dust settle down, hundreds of Carack were smears on the ground. The blood of the Carack were also mixed with the bodies of the Rama warriors.

“Now I'm slowly starting to see the end.”

Valencia smiled slyly and murmured. It had been two days since the federation had rallied their entire army and set forth towards the Rama base. They crossed the snowy mountain border and reached 15 km of their destination. The Rama had installed barricades there and had already arranged their defensive lines.

‘Sheesh, I deliberately bypassed the border for security.....’

The advancing troops must've been detected by a Rama scouting unit. Initially the federation's plan had been to advance to a distance where they could bombard the Rama base with their heavy weapons. If their tanks switched to Siege mode then the damage and range of their bombardment would rise explosively. If they switched to this mode within range of the base then they would have a chance to win.

'But they became aware faster than I expected.'

He guessed that the Rama had large numbers of defense facilities in this area so they would be detected eventually. The problem was that it was faster than expected so the Rama's defences were solid. So far the military situation on Beltana was 6:4, with the federation being inferior. The federation was losing so they didn't get enough reinforcements and supplies from the galactic federation. The Rama also used the Carack while the federation had a limited number of androids. Thus the federation started to dispatch prisoners towards the Bellin constellation. However, things were different now. 200 mercenaries were dispatched once the location of the Rama base was discovered. They were also supplied with advanced weapons. Therefore their combat power had jumped! The effect was clearly proven in battle. Since the battle started 2 days ago, the federation had managed to march within 5 km of the Rama base.

'Now it is almost finished!'

"Armoured squadrons 1,2 and 3, go! We will reach their base after this battle!"

100 soldiers shouted after hearing Valencia's words.

"Armour armament!"

Their bags opened and a large capsule like object flew out. The capsules floated in the air and revolved like a puzzle before changing into armour. They fell like lightning and enveloped the bodies of the soldiers.

Tong-! Tong-! Tong-! Tong-!

The metal encircled the arms and legs and closed up. The parts around the head and upper body tightened and gave out steam. Once the combination of all parts were complete, the soldiers turned into robots 2 metres large. This was the federation's battle suit. It was the original form of the armoured platoon.

“Rush!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The 100 people of the armoured platoon rushed towards the Rama army. The battle suits also fired various rounds of ammunition. Valencia looked at the heat wave it caused and took out his Beam Sword.

‘No one can stop me! This is my battlefield!’

“I arrived just in time.”

Ark smiled and muttered. Flames and smoke soared on the horizon. And the sound of gunshots was audible. It was several kilometre away but he didn't need to see it with his own eyes. There was a battle going on between the federation and the Rama.

“That Valencia, he seems to be making quite an effort.”

The battle was taking place 5 km away from the Rama base. The Rama weren't blind so they would know that the federation was approaching. Clearly they would form a defense line further away from the base. Yet the federation managed to push it back to 5 km from the base. And one of the leaders of the allied forces was Valencia! Valencia was fighting extremely hard.

‘It is natural. He knows the location of the Rama base and even received command of the federation army. If he shattered the Rama base with this

strategy then he will monopolize all the achievements. He will become a hero and receive colossal bonuses. But.....’

Ark lowered his eyes and winced. Ark was currently hiding on a hill near a military garrison. There was a large dome in the middle of the garrison and were surrounded by many buildings and tents. The scale made it clear that it was the Rama central base.

“I’m sorry but this is mine.”

This was the Rama base Valencia was trying to get to. But Ark was on a hill several hundred metres from it. Ark arrived here before the federation’s army.....

‘The federation rallied their forces for a surprise attack. The Rama will soon find out about the attack. Obviously they will build a defense line to prevent the advance of the federation army. In this situation they had to rally all their troops. Then the Rama’s base will be empty!’

It was the first thing that popped into Ark’s head when hearing about the federation’s strategy. Then a path naturally emerged.

Crevasse → Pyramid → Warp from the Pharaoh’s room → the ground → Rama’s main base.

This was the path Ark had taken while experiencing various hardships. His only idea had been to return to the federation base. When he thought about it, there was a shortcut to safely return to the Rama base. Ark arrived here before the federation’s army thanks to the shortcut. No, he arrived when there was a lot of time left.

‘They had a lot of people so there is a limit to how fast the main army can move. In addition, they had to fight the Rama so they would take at least four days to arrive. If I utilize the pyramid then I can arrive the Rama base within a day. There is plenty of time while the Rama and federation fight so there is no need to hurry.’

So Ark had plenty of time to kill. He could gain some experience from the Anubis. He intentionally fell into a trap and wandered around the infinite rooms. This was because he already knew a way to defeat the traps.

Moreover, this time he wasn't alone. There were the 20 Silver Hand and 10 Royal Guards so that was 30 people.

“Concentrate and shoot!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tang! Tang!

Ark gave a command and dozens of bullets crossed through the air into the eye. The Anubis turned into a pile of stone. At this time, the average level of the Royal Guards was level 25. They swept through the level 35 Anubis with the 30 troops and the Royal Guards gained 3 levels! The Silver Hand and Ark who were level 40 also gained 1 level.

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	45
Species	Human	Occupation	Pioneer
Crime	3,500	Adventure	100
Health	900 (+90)	Mental Power	450
Strength	105 (+23)	Agility	155
Stamina	175 (+18)	Wisdom	15
Intelligence	85	Luck	15
* Title: Cleaning Foreman (Agility + 3)			
* Body Coating: Prisoner			
+ The Prisoner coating is limited to the region of Beltana.			
+ Your body information will belong to the galactic federation after			

receiving the Prisoner coating.

+ You are unable to receive any other body coating until the Prisoner coating is removed.

Fortunately he was able to reach level 45 despite his prisoner status. The Anubis also dropped 300 Zaliman ores. In the past he would've have been able to obtain this loot but the bag spaces had increased with the number of members. Of course, he had to share the loot among the people but it was better than nothing. But the happy hunting didn't last long. There was also an end to the rooms that he thought went on for infinity. Once they destroyed hundreds of years, the remaining rooms only contained piles of broken stone.

'It is impossible to gain experience and loot like this forever.'

Ark sighed with disappointment when a message appeared.

-You have destroyed 100% of the Murat's traps and obtained the <Ignorant Destroyer> title.

The Murat is a race that values wisdom above all. Because they are wise, they even respect the thieves who robbed their graves. That is the reason the Murat designed the traps where having wisdom would allow the thieves to escape.

However, there is another way to release the traps. If you can't solve the secret then destroying 1,000 rooms will release the trap. You must be a very ignorant person. However, you didn't give up so your patience is just as admirable as wisdom.

<Title Effect: Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7, Stamina +7)>

It was a new title.

'But Ignorant Destroyer.....'

He wanted to ask about the secret of the trap. However, he wouldn't have received the title if he hadn't destroyed all the rooms. Then didn't Ignorant Destroyer fit? But what was the secret of the trap?

'Ah, I don't know. Anyway, I got a title so it doesn't matter. And I don't have any more time.'

Of course Ark wasn't going to stay there forever. He had returned to the pyramid for a reason. Ark's goal was something else!

'It is this!'

The Rama's base located at the bottom of the hill!

"Valencia has already received a lot of achievements by intercepting my information. But information is only information. It has no meaning unless the war is won. And the prerequisite for winning is to destroy the Fairy and Star Gate. Figuring out the location of the base is nothing compared to that."

This was the reason Valencia was fighting so hard. However, Ark had already arrived at the Rama's base with 30 people. The base was also empty because all the Rama were trying to stop the federation army.

'I can take care of the Fairy and Star Gate before the federation gets here!'

This was Ark's final goal.

"Are you ready?"

Ark examined the base for a while before turning around and asking. Clem bit his cigar and lifted a huge rifle.

"Who are you speaking to? We are mercenaries. We're always ready."

"We are also prepared."

The Royal Guards took out their weapons and answered.

"You should know this already but this operation relies on secrecy and speed. The federation had advanced to a point several kilometres from here so most

of the troops have been rallied to defend. But there will still be some troops at the base. We have to quickly take care of the Fairy and Star Gate before they notice.”

“Then we should process that first.”

Clem pointed to a watchtower in the centre of the base. Ark had already been here. The shapes were different but the arrangement of the buildings were similar to the federation’s base. The headquarters was a building in the centre with barracks around it.

‘The structure is similar so the location of the Fairy and the Star Gate should be the same.’

The Rama’s Star Gate was probably underneath the headquarters. Therefore the headquarters in the centre was one of Ark’s goals. The watchtower Clem was pointing to was in front of the headquarters. If they wanted to reach headquarters then they would have to go through the watchtower. There was another reason why they had to dispose of the watchtower.

‘The Rama’s Fairy!’

A crystal pillar was next to the watchtower. It was the Rama’s Fairy that he had seen a few times on the internet. The Rama’s Fairy was also built in the square in front of the headquarters.

‘There are two Rama warriors guarding the Fairy. One near the Fairy and one on the watchtower.....’

Ark considered a while before asking Clem.

“It is possible to snipe them?”

“It is possible to secretly take care of one but two is impossible.”

“Then that’s fine. I’ll take care of the other one.”

“You alone?”

“If several people move together then the probability of being detected is higher.”

Clem scratched his beard and looked at Ark for a while. Then he laughed and nodded.

“Okay, I’ll leave it to you.”

Ark descended the hill after hearing Clem’s reply. He had previously stolen a bike so Ark had experience with sneaking into the base. There were fewer troops so the risk had actually decreased.

If he used Withdrawal and hid using the terrain then he easily managed to reach the vicinity of the Fairy.

-Withdrawal has been used.

<Probability of being detected by an enemy: 55%>

But the risk level significantly increased once he reached the vicinity of the watchtower. Ark hid behind a box near the Rama warrior guarding the Fairy. The distance was about 100 meters. After that there were no obstacles to hide behind.

‘But I just need the right timing!’

Ark quietly pulled out the Impact Blade and held his breath. And he waited for a Rama warrior patrolling the Fairy to turn the opposite way.

‘Now!’

He jumped over the box and ran towards the Rama warrior. However, he had only ran 50 metres before the Rama warrior at the watchtower reacted.

-Eh? W-who?

The Rama warrior barely finished talking when his head bounced back. The

Rama warrior staggered and grabbed the railing. The head continuously shook and he fell over the railing. The Rama warrior patrolling the Fairy flinched as a colleague suddenly fell from above. He then discovered the rapidly approaching Ark.

–I-intruder.....ack!

But his voice couldn't continue. Ark's hand had narrowed the distance and covered the warrior's mouth. He then kicked the back of the knee and shoved the blade into the neck. The Rama warrior received a critical hit and his health quickly fell. If he continued fighting like this then he would definitely win but there was no time.

“Armour armament!”

Ark immediately pulled out his battle suit. He left the sword lodged in the Rama's neck and shouted.

“18 Barrage!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

18 Barrage was the special skill attached to Hyper Drone that drained all the mana! Most of the troops had been rallied to fight against the federation's army so the sentry was only level 30.

It wasn't necessary to use this skill against an opponent like this but it was necessary to get the best effect. No other skill could top the speed and accuracy of the skill. The Rama warrior jumped like a freshly caught fish every time he was hit by the fist but the sword lodged in his neck meant he couldn't scream. And when Ark's fist hit the chest 15 times.....

-Achievement
+40.

The Rama warrior turned into a bloody rice cake.

‘Phew, the first checkpoint has been passed.’

The battle suit was peeled off and Ark removed his sword. He turned around and looked at the Rama warrior splattered on the ground. It was the Rama warrior that had fallen from the watchtower next to the Fairy.

‘.....It’s not a joke?’

Ark looked at the three holes in the Rama’s head and laughed. It wasn’t necessary to say but the Rama warrior hadn’t just fallen to his death. It was the skill of Clem who was the leader of the Silver Hand. Clem had sniped the Rama warrior from his spot on the hill. The Rama warrior couldn’t even scream with distress thanks to Clem’s skill. If this was a FPS game then the enemy would’ve died with the first shot but Galaxian was a RPG game. Unless there was a large level difference, it was hard for a sniper to kill with a headshot on the first hit. Furthermore, the sniper rifle was one of the slowest guns. It was possible to do 3 consecutive headshots because there were two more snipers apart from Clem. They were Kalliben and Beleol from the Royal Guards.

‘Not long ago they only had a 50% success rate.....’

The Royal Guards hadn’t just obtained experience from the pyramid hunting. The Silver Hand were mercenaries with a lot more experience and combat skills than the Royal Guards. In addition, they also had specialized expertise so they were incomparable to the Royal Guards. Ark realized that fighting in the pyramid was a chance to narrow the gap between the two groups.

‘It is possible to learn a new skill in one or two days. Having a more experienced warrior teaching them the skill will make them learn faster!’

So Ark divided up the group. The effect definitely showed. The Silver Hand already had a good impression of the Royal Guards. When members with similar skills were paired together, the Silver Hand was taught sword skills while the Royal Guards were taught in firearms. Therefore the Royal Guards gained a lot of skill and experience. The ones who showed the most progress

was Kalliben and Beleol who were taught by Clem. Now Kalliben and Beleol could shoot a hole in the enemy's head from hundreds of metres away.

“You are talented. If I teach you well then you will become a sniper who won't lost to anyone.”

Clem was especially impressed with Kalliben's growth. The Royal Guards' loyalty was at the maximum after the 'Ark eating bugs' incident! Their growth was the same as Ark's growth.

‘Anyway.....’

Ark took out a square object from his bag. He attached it to the lower part of the Fairy and a message appeared.

-C-6 has been installed.

The pre-set timer has been activated.

<60 minutes.....59 minutes 59 seconds.....59 minutes 58 seconds.....>

It was the C-6 bombs he obtained from the troopers not long ago! He didn't have an explosives related skill so he couldn't use the C-6 directly. It was difficult for him to set the timer without it exploding at the same time. However, that problem was easily solved once he joined the Silver Hand. Electromagnetic mines were used with Nakuma hunting so the Silver Hand also had an explosives expert. The member had pre-set the timer of the C-6 beforehand.

‘It will explode in 1 hour!’

He had handled the Rama warrior in the watchtower. The C-6 is installed on the Fairy so the only thing to take care of is the Star Gate in headquarters! Ark's plan was to take care of everything in 1 hour and then escape from the base.

‘There is plenty of time but I don’t know what variables there are so I need to hurry!’

He went straight towards headquarters after installing the C-6. The detachment members were already gathered in front of headquarters.

“Now I can’t call you squirt anymore.”

Clem laughed and said warmly after Ark joined them.

“I’ve started the C-6. In order to escape the base within 1 hour, we need to go through the barracks and reach the Star Gate within at least 30 minutes. Is that possible?”

“You should ask that guy. Hey, how about it?”

“I’m almost done.”

Heksu replied with manipulating his Nymphe. Heksu was a Scavenger in the Silver Hand who went around gathering the wreckage of the Nakuma. Heksu had kept on trying to persuade Ark to become his successor but he kept on refusing. Ark didn’t realize it until they met again on Beltana but a Scavenger’s job wasn’t just to pick up japtem. Heksu’s actual work in the Silver Hand was.....

“Captain, the scan has finished.”

Heksu laughed and raised his head. At the same time, a map of a complicated structure appeared on Heksu’s Nymphe. Surprisingly, it was the map of the Rama’s headquarters! This was Heksu’s Scavenger ability. Heksu’s occupation was assistance since as collecting items, identifying items, repair or upgrading items, as well as determining the terrain of a dungeon or building through special technology. He still didn’t want to become Heksu’s successor but.....

‘This profession will clearly be a big help on adventures!’

So Ark listened to some of Heksu’s wishes.

“How about it, do you understand it better now?”

“Yes, a little.”

“Huhuhu, you are wise.”

Heksu gloated as he patted Hegel’s sleek head. Ark gave Hegel to Heksu who was desiring a successor. Hegel might not have any combat capability but he was clever enough to calculate the trajectory of missiles. Fortunately Heksu quite liked Hegel.

‘Once again, it truly is an excellent choice.’

He handed someone loyal over to the persistently clingy Heksu! This was how Ark managed to grow his summons in the previous game.

“Good work. Please transmit the information to the members’ Nymphes.”

“I understand.”

Heksu operated his Nymph and the map was sent to all the members’ Nymphes.

“Now, let’s get started. Our time limit is 30 minutes. Don’t bother saving your Fire bullets or other special ammunition. If we destroy the Star Gate then we will have played the main role in the victory. The galactic federations can pay back the cost of the bullets!”

“Yes!”

Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok!

The detachment cheered and loaded their firearms. They couldn’t make a lot of noise once they entered the headquarters. The only thing left was speed!

“Charge!”

The crew ran into the headquarters. There were dozens of complex passages within the headquarters. However, there was no reason to get lost thanks to Heksu’s map. A 3D map rose from the Nymph and indicated the position of

the Star Gate. Ark and the detachment shot like the wind towards that location. They ran into some Rama warriors along the way but it wasn't a problem.

-Heok! Y-you guys.....?

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

It was a scary assault by 30 guns! The Rama warrior was riddled with holes and collapsed. It was truly overwhelming! One or two Rama warriors couldn't slow down their rush.

"Pippin, Jupiter, install C-6 in 100 metre intervals. Do it quickly!"

"I understand."

Two members obeyed Clem's orders and installed C-6 at every corner.

-C-6 has been installed.

The pre-set timer has been activated.

<50 minutes.....49 minutes 59 seconds.....49 minutes and 58 seconds.....>

-C-6 has been installed.

The pre-set timer has been activated.

<40 minutes.....39 minutes 59 seconds.....39 minutes and 58 seconds.....>

The timer of Ark's C-6 also floated in front of him. The C-6 Ark attached to the Fairy had a time limit of 1 hour. However, the C-6 the crew attached had a limit of 50 minutes, 40 minutes.....it became increasingly less. Ark had shortened the time so that they would all blow up simultaneously. And.....

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

–Heok! T-the federation! How did the federation get here?

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

–Kuack! N-no! We must defend this place!

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

–Damn, there are too many of them!

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

They rushed forward and fired their guns for 30 minutes. Ark and the detachment defeated 20 Rama and finally arrived at a huge underground hangar. In the centre of a hanger was a spiral shaped object with swirling blue light. And a 3D image of the galaxy was shown on the ceiling.

“W-we arrived! The Rama’s Star Gate!”

They had finally arrived at the Rama’s Star Gate.

‘By the way, did the Star Gate originally emit such an intense light?’

Ark frowned as he looked at the swirling blue lights. Ark had seen the Star Gate twice, once when he left R-14 and once when he arrived at Beltana. Back then the Star Gate emitted light but only enough for dozens of fireflies to wrap around his body. It also only flashed when Ark moved. However, the Rama’s Star Gate seemed like a huge pillar of light.

‘Well, the Rama’s Star Gate might just be a little different.’

Ark didn’t think about it too deeply. He couldn’t afford to think deeply about it.

“There is no time. 30 minutes has already passed. We have to escape the base before the C-6 explodes! Pippin, Jupiter, meticulously install the C-6 in every corner. The timer is 30 minutes. Ark, the rest of the crew will wait at the entrance in case of a surprise attack.”

And they waited a short time.

“Captain-nim, the installation is over!”

“Okay. Shall we leave now? Ark, let’s go!”

Clem said as he looked at Ark.

Wiiiiiiing!

–Karam! Tu! Raminata! Irikuna bam! BK-III, BK-IV, kuram....

Sirens started ringing and mechanical sounds emerged from the loudspeaker. Clem and the members faces inside the hanger warped.

“Dammit, is there an emergency situation in the base?”

“That’s not it.”

Ark turned around with surprise and said. Clem couldn’t understand but Ark had heard the broadcast just now.

-All workers immediately leave the hangar. In 30 seconds the experiments BK-III and BK-IV will be transferred over from the home planet. The is risk involved with the transmission so all workers should immediately leave the hanger.

“Something is being transferred here!”

Ark exclaimed.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The blue light swirled and exploded violently. Ark, Clem and the members gathered at the hangar entrance were pushed back several metres. Ark rolled on the ground and raised his head. The violently swirling light gradually subsided.....and ‘it’ appeared.

‘We’ve arrived! We’re almost there!’

Valencia looked at the battlefield with a flushed face. His heart beat wildly with every step. For the last two days, the federation army had been pushing back the Rama's defense lines with ammunition and attack. The Rama had retreated little by little from the furious attack until they were only 5 km away from the base. The last line of defense persistently resisted but.....

'No one can stop us now!'

The surprise attack of the armoured squadron was decisive. While they were resisting the firepower, Valencia led the armoured platoon down for a surprise attack. The defense line had already suffered terrible damage and the armoured platoon managed to destroy 20 tanks with only 3 casualties. The tanks were the core of the core of the heavy weapons! The Rama suffered heavy losses to their core power and were forced to withdraw. The federation army pursued the Rama. No, they weren't chasing the retreating Rama army. The federation's goal from the beginning was the Fairy and Star Gate at the Rama's base.

"Heh, it ends here. Now there are no more places for you to withdraw to."

Finally the federation army had marched right in front of the Rama base. They had first encountered the Rama 15 km from the base. For two days the federation had suffered significant damage. Out of 700 soldiers, 400 had died while they lost 5 tanks and 2 battle suits. They lost approximately 60% of their power. However, the Rama suffered even more serious damage. The 1,000 strong army with both Rama and Carack were reduced to 100 people. Their tanks were also destroyed so they had lost 80~90% of their power. In the end, the Rama were pushed back to their base. The Rama army had nowhere left to run. They were also tattered so one more attack would wipe them out.

"Give up. The war is over."

Valencia already felt like he was the winner. Then he heard the voice of the Rama commander who was 200 metres away.

“Baram, kum madaraka daranium, akani karamanada!”

He couldn't understand what they were saying. Valencia turned around and a communication soldier quickly translated.

–Not yet you cheeky federation trash. No, it is just starting now!

“That foolish bastard.”

Valencia laughed at his ludicrous words. And he raised his hand to signal an attack.

Kukung! Kukung! Kukung!

There was suddenly a ringing sound from the headquarters of the Rama base. The Rama commander laughed as the headquarters started vibrating.

–Hahahaha! It came! It has arrived! Stupid federal trash! It is good that you guys came here! I'll compliment you for managing to find this place. I'll pay my respects to a fellow warrior. But it was a stupid thing to do. This place will be your grave. I'll show you the fearful existence that the Rama created! Now, come out!

“A fearful existence? What does that.....”

He was uncomfortable after hearing the noise. Valencia and the federation army turned and looked at the Rama's headquarters. All the eyes of the federation and Rama army were concentrated on that building.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku! Chiiii!

There was a roar and one wall of the headquarters split from side to side. The amazing thing that appeared.....

“Huk! W-what the hell?”

–Huk, w-what the hell?

Valencia and the Rama commander said at the same time. A soldier had emerged from the split wall. Surprisingly 20 more federation soldiers

appeared while covered in blood and dust. Valencia knew these soldiers!

“T-these guys?”

He muttered with a confused expression.

“What? It is the federation army. The main body already got here?”

“The Rama army is on the opposite side. Did we get the timing wrong?”

The soldiers from the headquarters said nosily as the surveyed the area.

“Now isn’t the time for that! Jump!”

“Ah! T-that’s right! Jump!”

The soldiers started running forward. They jumped forward and covered their head as they landed on the ground.

“.....”

There was 200 metres between the Rama and federation army. 400 soldiers from both sides looked at the soldiers with stupid eyes. Both the Rama and federation were confused about how federation soldiers managed to emerge from the headquarters. And why on earth were they sliding between both sides? But the most confused person was Valencia.

“Why are they here? That person was clearly.....”

Valencia murmured with confusion.

Pepeng-!

Suddenly a roar was heard from the Rama’s base. Valencia and the Rama commander both screamed at the same time.

-F-Fairy!

The Rama’s Fairy was wrapped in flames! And that was just the beginning.

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Dozens of explosions simultaneously occurred. At the same time an

information window appeared in front of Valencia and the 300 federation members.

-The Rama's Fairy on Beltana has been destroyed!

-The Rama's Star Gate on Beltana has been destroyed!

-All of the federation soldiers on Beltana will be given bonus points for winning!

<The Rama's Fairy and Star Gate have been destroyed and victory points given to all federation soldiers. The points will be paid according to contribution and all points will be converted to achievements when the war is over>

"The Fairy and the Star Gate....."

Valencia murmured with a dumb expression. This was one way to end a war on a disputed planet.

It was the destruction of the Fairy and Star Gate. If the Star Gate was destroyed then no reinforcements can be sent while the soldiers couldn't resurrect there if the Fairy was destroyed.

Naturally many achievement points would be given for the destruction of the Fairy and Star Gate! This was the reason Valencia fought so hard for the last few days. Valencia received achievements for reporting the location of the Rama's base. If he also destroyed the Fairy and Star Gate then it would be colossal achievements. He would become a hero who ended the Beltana war. So he fought while shedding blood for the last two days. And he finally advanced right in front of the Rama's base. Yet.....yet.....

It had immediately exploded. The guy, of all people.....

“Ark!”

Valencia could recognize him with one glance. The guy who ran away from the enemy’s headquarters was Ark! And following Ark were the prisoners. He didn’t know who the other soldiers were. He had no interest in why Ark who he thought was dead suddenly appeared from the headquarters. The most important thing to Valencia was that they managed to destroy the Fairy and Star Gate. Now that fellow Ark was lying on the ground in front of him.

“This is ridiculous! They can’t do this!”

An unbearable amount of anger built up inside him. Valencia and the Rama commander were both furious for different reasons. The Fairy and Star Gate were destroyed so the Rama’s defeat was already confirmed! And.....

-Kill! Those bastards! Kill those bastards!

“Kill! Those bastards! Kill those bastards!”

Valencia shouted at the same time as the Rama commander. The Rama immediately lifted their weapons but the federation soldiers looked puzzled.

“Huh? Kill them? Attack the Rama?”

“Dammit! Shut up!”

Valencia shouted angrily and lifted his Gatling gun. So 100 Rama and Valencia attacked Ark’s group!

Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Suddenly dozens of missiles flew and a sea of fire was created. The Rama and federation ran about in confusion from the absurd bombing. They looked at the direction the missiles flew from and screamed.

“Huk! W-what the hell?”

“An enormous shadow has appeared at the exploded base.....”

“That absurd size! P-perhaps that.....?”

Black smoke was blowing from the shattered Rama headquarters. Two massive shadows lumbered from the rubble of the headquarters and scattered the smoke with every step. A huge foot appeared from the smoke. The foot was attached to a glossy, red metal. The sharp claws on the feet split the smoke and a huge form showed up. It was a large, red, glossy metal form with a variety of weapons! It looked like one of the Rama’s biological soldiers but the size was huge. The body was similar to an ostrich but the size was 50 metres!

“Oh my god! T-that.....”

Pedro who was near Valencia stuttered with a pale face.

“Gigantic! It is the Rama’s Gigantic! A beast type Gigantic that hasn’t been seen yet!”

Doom Machine (Part: 1)

<Doom Machine>

A huge weapon has appeared in front of you after advancing to the enemy line. Gigantic is a versatile combat weapon present in Galaxian. Gigantic is a large planet destroying weapon made with the purpose of annihilating the enemy as well as adapting the planet's environment to suit the pioneers. They also have a strong attack and defense. At the end of the first Galaxian war, spaceships that could transport the Gigantic were blocked. The Star Gates at the time also weren't advanced enough to transmit such a high mass and the Gigantic became a relic of the past. Now a Gigantic has showed up on Beltana's battlefield. An intimidating Gigantic was sent to the disputed planet.

However, the federation is the one that received the biggest threat from the appearance of the Gigantic. Using an excellent strategy, the federation army was able to destroy the Fairy and Star Gate. But if you can't stop the Gigantic here and the federation army becomes destroyed then the federation base will be left defenseless. In addition, it was be impossible to re-enter and the rights to Beltana would have to be transferred to the Rama.

* If the Gigantic can't be stopped then all victory points won in the last decisive battle will be invalidated. On the other hand, defeating the Gigantic will give +500 victory points to all federation members and x10 points given to the group that directly defeats it. And a special compensation will be given to the soldier who plays a decisive role in its death. All victory points will be converted to achievements when the Beltana war is over.

<Difficulty: C ++>

“Gigantic.....”

The complexion of the federation army paled. The huge weapon Gigantic with extravagant destructive power made for major planet invasions. Their overwhelming attack meant they were called 'Devil of the Battlefield' during the 1st war and were the ultimate strategic weapon. Like the information window stated, the space ships that could transport the large mass of the Gigantic were sealed after the 1st galactic war. In addition, the current technology of the Star Gate meant that transmission of such a large mass was impossible. This was the first time seeing it for even the highest ranking commander Haman. In the past it was the strongest land weapon but the soldiers didn't know how much attack power it actually had. Despite that, the federation army still fell into a state of shock at the Gigantic's appearance. It was a massive weapon 50 metres in length! The tremendous size alone was enough to overwhelm the soldiers. But Valencia was focused on something else.

'Ark! That bastard!'

Valencia grinded his teeth together. The soldiers who ran away from the Rama base were Ark and the Royal Guards. Shortly after they emerged, a message popped up stating that the Rama's Fairy and Star Gate had been destroyed. It was definitely done by Ark's group.

'How on earth? Apart from the missing Ark, how did those prisoners managed to reach the Rama base before the main army? What the hell happened that I don't know about?'

No, what happened wasn't important. The important thing was that Ark and the Royal Guards had destroyed the enemy Fairy and Star Gate and received the achievements meant for Valencia. He had fought for many days to reach this place. Valencia had his status stolen by some chickens.

'But above all.....'

The problem was that Ark was alive. Valencia managed to receive 5,000 achievements from the data contained in the Carrier MR-II. However, the

original owner of the Carrier MR-II was Ark.

‘If Ark returns alive.....’

It would become clear that Valencia had intercepted Ark’s achievements. The 5,000 achievements that he had already collected and his silver medal of valour would fly away. So he had sent it back again. The Carrier MR-II! He also let the Rama know the place that Ark was hiding. However, Ark was still alive. The Rama’s Fairy and Star Gate was also destroyed.

‘Those stupid Rama! They couldn’t eat the dining table that I prepared for them? What is it doing? They couldn’t even control 1 prisoner in that condition!’ He blamed the Rama.

‘Anyway, I can’t let him leave. I have to handle him somehow!’

That was the only thought in Valencia’s head. But those thoughts only lasted for a few moments.

“Leader-nim, it is dangerous!”

Pedro’s voice was heard from behind him. Valencia’s face became stiff.

Kuong-! Kuong-! Kuong-!

The earth shook as the two legs of the 50 metres Gigantic approached! The ostrich like body rotated towards the federation army. Dozens of gun turrets attached to the body aimed at the federation army.

‘Bah, I don’t know how powerful the Gigantic’s weapons are but.....’

“Everybody be steady! It might be a large but it is slow! The Rama have already lost their fighting spirit. If we handle that chunk of iron then this war will end in the federation’s victory! Concentrate all our firepower and attack the Gigantic!”

“Did you hear the command? The target is the Gigantic in front! Concentrate all your firepower!”

The federation army regained their spirit after hearing Pedro's command. Just like other online games, Galaxian also had skills like 'Leadership' that influenced the troops. If a commander had a related skill then soldiers would move in a more orderly fashion. And Valencia was the leader of the 1st armoured platoon so he had that skill! The reaction was immediate.

Pepeng! Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu!

The tanks and troopers launched the heavy weapons. Hundreds of shells flew towards the Gigantic.

'The Gigantic was called the strongest land weapon but that was 100 years ago. Even if it was called the Devil of the Battlefield, it is still just a large lump of iron. In a war, the pre-emptive strike was the best weapon. No matter how strong the firepower, if it is blocked then it would just be a chunk of scrap metal. I'll prove that the Gigantic is just a relic of the past!'

It was impossible to withstand hundreds of ammunition without any damage. Valencia was sure that this attack would deal some damage. Hundreds of shells flew towards the body of the Gigantic. The moment the shells plunged downwards!

Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The gun turrets on the Gigantic's body simultaneously fired. At the same time, the shells flying through the air were hit and disappeared. Valencia became confused as the number of ammunition was decreased.

"Oh my god! T-that is the GEM.....the automatic interception system?"

GEM was a defense system that calculated and countered the orbit of the enemy's attack through a high precision computer. The GEM is equipped on some tanks but the number of calculations were limited and it could only intercept 2~3 at the most. The GEM attached to the base's headquarters was able to intercept more than 100 shells. That's why a long range bombardment on the base was difficult and the federation had to push right up to the

enemy's camp. Yet the Gigantic managed to intercept 100 shells at once!

‘It is equipped with a base class GEM?’

A moveable weapon was equipped with a base class defense system.

‘No, even a base class GEM has a limit! Even if it is a base class GEM, it can't intercept several hundred ammunition! If dozens of tanks and heavy weapons aim at the GEM then we can inflict some damage!’

Valencia's judgment was correct.

Pepeng! Pepeng! Kwa kwa kwa kwang! kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Dozens of projectiles broke through the defense system! There was a huge roar and the Gigantic's body was covered in smoke.

“That's it! That fellow will receive enormous damage! Those are heavy weapons.....”

“Leader-nim!”

Then Pedro screamed with surprise. Amazement appeared on Valencia's face.

“U-unbelievable.....!”

Kuong-! Kuong-! Kuong-!

The earth started shaking as the smoke cleared. A huge figure appeared as the dust settled.

Gigantic.....there was not one scratch on the body of the Gigantic. Every time the Gigantic took one step, the clear form of a honey shaped transparent object covered the body like scales.

“S-shield! A shield! A shield is entirely surrounding it!”

“T-this is ridiculous! How did the Gigantic.....”

“It was directly hit by dozens of shells but the shield didn't break!”

“Oh my god! It has a base class GEM and a shield?”

Hundreds of shells didn't even give one scratch. The federation soldiers stuttered at the shocking sight. Then 100 red lights attached to the Gigantic aimed at the federation army.

“Heok! M-Memeod! Deploy the anti-missile shield!”

A blue light emerged from the Memeod and covered Valencia and the federation army. The Memeod was the core of the federation army's power. It was used to transport troops but it also had attacking abilities. However, the major feature of the Memeod was its shield! The main duty of the Memeod was to deploy the shield to stop long range attacks. However.....

Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Dozens of shells fell like lightning bolts in a 50 metre area. The Memeod's shield only lasted against the first few dozen. Cracks spread on the shield after that and shells started to fall on the federation camp. Their tympanic membranes broke as flashes occurred. The ensuing scene was devastating! A huge crater was formed where the Gigantic's bombardment was concentrated. The bodies of the soldiers in that area couldn't even be seen. They were torn into so many pieces that not even a trace remained. Their shock changed to fear.

“A monster! That isn't a machine but a monster!”

“No wonder why the Gigantic is called the Devil of the Battlefield!”

Valencia felt the same as well. The huge machine relentlessly approached the federation army. In Valencia's eyes the Gigantic was no longer just a chunk of iron. It was truly a Devil of the Battlefield! It felt like a grim reaper was coming.

‘It is dangerous! This situation is dangerous!’

Valencia flinched and stepped backwards before suddenly stopping. And he clenched his teeth and shook his head forcefully.

‘No, I can’t give up yet!’

This battle was Valencia’s only chance. This was his opportunity to be a hero of the galactic federation! This was the opportunity of a lifetime for a regular user. But that was only when he won the war. Valencia was the main leader so he would be responsible for the loss.

‘This is no time to worry about Ark! Anyway, Ark is also a part of the federation army. I’m a commander of the federation so I have many chances to handle Ark. But it is no good if I die. It is the same if the federation army is wiped out. It is imperative to deal with the Gigantic!’

Valencia raised his head and looked at the Gigantic.

‘It might have the strength of a monster but strictly speaking, the Gigantic is a weapon. There must be a way to defeat it. I just don’t understand why.....’

Two Gigantic had emerged from the base. If both of them attacked at the same time then Valencia would be dead. However, only one Gigantic had attacked the federation army. He didn’t know why but the other one had moved in the direction of the Rama army.

‘.....This is our chance!’

Thoughts started turning over in Valencia’s head.

‘The Gigantic clearly had strong defense and attack power but its movement is slow. The GEM and shield is a way to offset those weaknesses. Perhaps that giant body is in order to attach the GEM and shield. But the GEM can’t intercept all shells. In other words, we can deal damage to the Gigantic if the shield isn’t there.’

However, the defense of the shield is tremendous. The dozens of ammunition only carved away 10% of the shield’s durability. That 10% damage also recovered in half a minute. Unlike the soldiers’ or Memeod’s shield, the Gigantic’s shield could regain its own energy. It was impossible to destroy the Gigantic’s shield with just a bombardment!

‘But there is a weakness in the shield!’

The shield had absolute defense against long range attacks like bullets or artillery shells. However, even this shield would become extremely weak against melee attacks.

‘Yes, it’s hard to imagine with that huge body.....the one to destroy the Gigantic is.....hand to hand combat!’

Valencia suddenly raised his head and exclaimed.

“Armoured platoons 1, 2 and 3! Use Armoured Armament!”

Capsule like objects emerged from the bags of 100 soldiers. The capsules changed into steel armour and wound around the bodies of the soldiers. The federation’s elite platoons changed into battle suit clad warriors.

“Rush!”

Kuaaaaaaah-!

100 armoured warriors rushed towards the Gigantic. Armoured warriors flocked from all sides like a bee swarm while Gigantic’s red lights chased them. The red light was lodged into dozens of armoured warriors.

“Rally all out firepower and don’t stop the bombardment!”

Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Projectiles flew from the federation army at Valencia’s command. The red light veered away from the armoured warriors and started chasing the shells. The Gigantic’s gun turrets fired and most of the shells disintegrated in mid-air. A satisfied smile spread on Valencia’s face.

‘As expected. The Gigantic’s system can’t attack and defend at the same time. And the GEM’s main priority is defense. If we bombard it non-stop then the attacks can be sealed. If the other Gigantic wasn’t attacking the Rama and the two joined forces together then.....’

It was already hard enough dealing with 1 Gigantic.

‘I have to finish this before the other one heads here!’

Snap!

Valencia drove his beam sword into the Gigantic’s leg. The blue honeycomb shaped shield appeared on the Gigantic’s leg.

-The Gigantic’s shield has received a blow!

<The Gigantic’s shield energy
-0.1%>

It was vulnerable to melee attacks but that attack only reduced the energy by 0.1%. However, Valencia wasn’t the only armoured warrior attacking the Gigantic. The federation army had 100 people!

Snap! Snap! Snap! Snap!

100 warriors swung their swords and hammers every chance they got. The bombardment of the shield caused the energy gauge to quickly fall. Nevertheless, the Gigantic wasn’t an easy opponent to handle.

Kuong-! Kuong-! Kuong-!

The Gigantic roared and plunged into the federation’s camp. The huge body was 50 metres. Its weight itself was a strong weapon. The Gigantic stepping indiscriminately on the soldiers started to stop the relentless bombardment. Once the Gigantic strode into the federation’s camp, dozens of slow moving troopers were stepped on. But the Gigantic’s target wasn’t the troopers. The Gigantic’s target was the immobile tanks!

Snap, snap, pepeng!

The shield was no use against the Gigantic’s heavy weight. The tanks were instantly crushed.

“Ugh! Block it! Stop its movement using the shells!”

However, it wasn't just the Gigantic attacking the federation.

–Fools! This place will be your grave.

The Rama started to attack the federation army after the Gigantic's offense. The fighting became confused once the Rama mixed in with the Gigantic. The Rama were close to defeat after their Fairy and Star Gate were destroyed. The only way for the Rama to win now was to wipe out the federation army and advance to their base. The Gigantic could reverse the situation!

Snap, snap, pepeng!

Thus the federation were cornered by the Gigantic and Rama. In the end, the federation couldn't protect the heavy tanks and they were crushed by the Gigantic. However, the federation also wasn't playing around.

Chwajijijijik!

The Gigantic's shield finally sparked and disappeared. Valencia and the armoured warriors he led avoided the other attacks and finally managed to crush the shield. The armoured platoons were the core of the federation's army and there was no doubt about their competency.

“That's it! Now switch to the warheads and attack!”

The armoured warriors changed to their guns and started firing. However, the Gigantic still had the GEM even if the shield was removed. And a large number of soldiers had been killed by the combined offensive of the Rama and Gigantic. The GEM intercepted the shells so not that many of them hit the body directly.

“Leader-nim, this is our last tank!”

“Dammit! Stop them! We have to stop them! If that tank is destroyed then our firepower will halve. We will still suffer enormous damage even if the

Gigantic's shield is removed!"

"B-but we can't stop it thanks to the interference from the Rama.

Pedro shouted desperately as he looked at the Gigantic. Finally the Gigantic was able to step on the last tank.

'Wait? That reminds me, the medium sized tank.....'

Then something popped into Valencia's head. Valencia used his Nymph to connect to the operator of the remaining tank.

While the melee battle was occurring between the Rama, Gigantic and the federation army.

"Dammit!"

Ark cursed as he turned his body. A slope was behind him and he rolled down.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Dirt and ice went flying from the place where Ark was previously standing. A wave of dirt was pushed downwards and covered Ark. His skin was torn by stones and ice but he had no time to worry about that.

'If I stop then I'll die!'

Ark raised his body and jumped to the other side.

Kuong-!

A huge piece of iron then fell towards a pile of dirt. The 10 metre diameter piece of land caved in.

"Pant pant pant, at this rate....."

Ark breathed harshly as he ran.

Let's return to when the Rama's Fairy and Star Gate exploded.

‘It is a success! The Fairy and Star Gate are destroyed!’

While the Rama and federation were fighting each other, Ark had led the Silver Hand and Royal Guards to the empty base to blow up the Fairy and Star Gate. Of course, his strategy was able to succeed because the federation had drawn the Rama army to a place several kilometres away. As a result, Ark managed to blow up the Fairy and Star Gate!

-You have acquired 5,000 victory points!

<These victory points will be converted for achievements when the war ends>

Ark, the Royal Guards and the Silver Hand. He still received 5,000 victory points despite it being divided among 30 people. If it was changed to achievements then Ark and the Royal Guards will be able to be pardoned! If the federation swept up the remnants of the Rama army then he would be free. He also had the pleasant sensation of beating Valencia!

‘Damn, their timing ruined everything!’

However, three things happened that Ark couldn’t expect. The first thing was that 2 Gigantic were sent through the Rama’s Star Gate. The Gigantic’s combat power was too strong for 30 people to take care of by themselves. Moreover, Ark had encountered the Gigantic when there were 30 minutes left until the C-6 exploded.

“R-run! We’re dead if we are caught!”

Ark’s group ran away from the hangar without looking back. It was fortunate that Ark’s group knew the structure of headquarters thanks to Heksu. The Gigantic couldn’t chase after them in the narrow passages so they managed to escape from headquarters before the explosion. Then Ark’s second unexpected mistake occurred.

‘The federation has already reached here!’

Ark’s plan had been to blow up headquarters before the federation arrived at the base. Yet it was already surrounded by both the Rama and federation. Of course, if Ark was an ordinary federation soldier then he would’ve welcomed it with open arms. However, Ark wasn’t a conventional federation soldier. He was part of the prisoner unit bullied by Valencia. Valencia had also intercepted the Carrier MR-II that Ark sent and received the achievements. He had to hide this fact before Ark registered on the Fairy. It was clear what would happen to Ark if he encountered Valencia. It was highly likely that he would pursue and fire at Ark. His expectations were met.

“Kill! Those bastards! Kill those bastards!”

He heard the command clearly even while lying face down in the dirt. Valencia sounded like a little child running amok. It was the reason he wanted to blow up the headquarters and leave before the federation army showed up. However, the federation army had advanced faster than expected and now Valencia was aiming at him.

‘Those damn spiritless Rama! Valencia already broke them and pushed all the way to here?’

He blamed the Rama. Just as Ark was about to be attacked by the Rama.....

Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Dozens of missiles flew from the headquarters and detonated. The federation was upset by the bombing but Ark knew the identity behind the missiles. They belonged to the two Gigantic that followed Ark’s group!

‘This might work out!’

An ‘!’ popped into Ark’s head. The federation army had reached the Rama’s base. In the Rama’s view, it was imperative to block the federation army. Therefore the Gigantic’s first priority would be to attack the federation

army. The army would be forced to counterattack. Valencia was a commander in the army so even he couldn't pursue Ark in such a situation.

'Yes, I can aim the Gigantic at the federation army and run away!'

That was Ark's plan. And he sneaked away from his location while the Rama and federation were confused by the explosions. This was Ark's third mistake.

Kuong-! Kuong-! Kuong-!

One Gigantic was heading towards Ark! Two of them had been transferred through the Star Gate.

As Ark expected, one of them started to attack the federation army. Yet the remaining Gigantic ignored them and headed straight towards Ark.

"How come? Why? What have I done?"

Ark questioned it but there was a reason for it. In fact, the two Gigantic had already suffered damage before the federation army attacked. The damage came from when the C-6 blew up headquarters. Ark's group had installed C-6 throughout the headquarters and in the hangar. And the current leader of the group was registered to Ark. In other words, it was like the Gigantic's aggro had been transferred to Ark. In online games, monsters would become more aggressive as they receive damage. The monster preferred to attack users with a high aggro value.

One Gigantic had been attacked by the frightened federation and the aggro had changed from Ark to the army. However, the federation didn't attack the other Gigantic so it was still concerned with Ark.

Valencia was playing in the wrong place.

"Dammit! Is it a monster not a weapon? How can this be called a strategic weapon? What is the point of mounting 386 computers in the 24th century? Isn't it obviously important just by looking at it? I might have high aggro but it is natural to attack the federation army first!"

But there was no use complaining. Anyway, the federation army didn't have to deal with two Gigantic because they were already being crushed by one. Ark had unintentionally helped the federation.....

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

“Hik! Hik! Hik!”

It felt like he was going to die. At one point, dozens of shells had appeared above him when his movements were stopped. His shield and defense was no match for that. On the other hand, Ark's attacks.....

“Sonic sword! Set Bullets Shooting! Impact Shot!”

Ting-! Ting-! Ting-!

He only did 0.1% damage to the shield. And that 0.1% damage would recover after some time. Ark was fighting by himself. So Ark gave up on attacking quite early. This was one reason why he managed to survive so far.

‘The Gigantic's firepower reaches the mid-sized tanks. I'll be hit within a few seconds if I try to run away. But there is a place where the Gigantic's dozens of gun turrets will find difficult to reach! That blind spot is.....’

“Here!”

Ark slid across the snow and went through the Gigantic's legs. It was impossible for the Gigantic's bombardment to reach between its legs. The Gigantic was run by 386 computers so it wasn't stupid enough to attack itself between the legs. Of course, being between the legs wasn't a completely safe place.

Kuong-! Kuong-! Kuong-!

The Gigantic immediately raised its legs when Ark hid there and tried to step on him. If it hit then Ark would be crushed by hundreds of tons of rock. If the Gigantic stepped on him then it would be instant death!

“Snow Walking!”

Sasasasa! Sasasasa!

It was the walking method he acquired after wandering across snow for so many days. Ark used his cockroach like tenacity to avoid being damaged by the feet. He was cut by the flying stones and ice every time the foot fell but that was trivial damage.....

Bbok! Bbok! Bbok! Bbok!

-You have recovered 1 health.

-You have recovered 1 health.....

The Charenjok's token was placed on his head to heal him. Therefore Ark managed to last 10 minutes against the Gigantic.

‘But now that has reached a limit!’

He had been rolling underneath the Gigantic's feet for 10 minutes. He was at his physical and mental limit. Furthermore, the damage was piling up and he couldn't ignore the debris anymore. His health was recovered to some degree by the octopus but it only lasted for 10 minutes. Once the token stopped working then his health started to earnestly decrease.

‘I found some recovery ampoules at the bunker the other day but it is no use extending my life for a few minutes if I can't defeat the Gigantic. I'm also being attacked by shells and stamping. Either of these attacks would mean instant death. However, it isn't possible to run away. If I sneak away from the Gigantic's legs then I'll be turned into ashes before I even get 100 metres.’

This wasn't a situation where he could gamble. But Ark didn't have any countermeasures and time was running out.

‘Is it still not ready yet?’

Ark rolled around the ground without any spirit.

–Ark! It's here! The preparations are finished!

Clem's voice was suddenly heard through the Nymphe. Ark who was sliding around on the snow suddenly turned around. While Ark, the Rama, Gigantic and the federation army were engaged in a fierce battle, the other detachment members had hid in the wreckage of the Rama headquarters. A small light of hope appeared on Ark's face.

“That's it! Hopefully now.....”

While the Gigantic was catching up with him, Ark had planned different ways to escape with the detachment. The Gigantic was only following one person around. It had selected Ark who was the leader of the detachment.

‘Well, I did install some C-6 inside headquarters.....’

Ark regretted it but it was the way things turned out. Ark was able to plan out some strategies with the detachment while running around. Clem had contacted Ark to report that the preparations for his plan were finished.

‘This is the best I can do. If it doesn't work then I'll die!’

“Everybody get ready! There is only one chance for this!”

–We know.

Clem answered as Ark grabbed his sword.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a red flash and the Rama base started shaking. When he flinched and turned around, Ark saw that the Gigantic fighting against the federation had collapsed with the lower part completely destroyed. The tank shattered underneath it was spouting a black smoke. It was the federation's final tank that the Gigantic was about to crush.

‘What's that? Why did that happen when the Gigantic stepped on the

tank.....?’

Ark made a puzzled expression. Then Clem’s voice was audible from the Nymphe.

–It self-destructed.

“Self-destruct?”

–Yes, that red flash if the nuclear fusion engine of the tank exploding. But the nuclear fusion engine is designed to prevent any attack from an outside attack. That means the nuclear engine was purposely exploded. They exploded the engine as soon as it was stepped on. The shield was already stripped so the Gigantic couldn’t withstand the damage. The commander carrying out such a bold strategy.....

Clem murmured with surprise. It definitely wasn’t a tactic that Ark would’ve thought of. That’s because Ark didn’t know about nuclear fusion engines until now.

‘The tanks contain nuclear fusion engines? Wait? Then perhaps.....’

Ark thought for a moment before asking Clem. It was a technical question so Heksu replied.

-It is possible.

“Then can you take care of it right away? It won’t be possible with the Royal Guards but the federation army won’t be watching the Silver Hand. Hegel should stay there as only the Silver Hand members should enter the federation camp.”

–What are you going to do?

“I’m going to prepare the situation.”

–Understood. We’ll believe in you and obey your command.

The group that was hiding in the wreckage of headquarters moved onto the

battlefield.

‘I said that but.....

Ark threw his body again to avoid the falling foot and looked up at the Gigantic. It would be meaningless if he couldn’t take care of the Gigantic. He moved it near the headquarters where the detachment had prepared his plan.

‘The preparations have ended! Now it’s time for a counterattack!’

Ark’s eyes flashed. And.....

“Snow Walking!”

Sasasasak! Sasasasak!

He slid like a cockroach between the Gigantic’s legs. Well, it wasn’t that different from his previous actions....but there was one thing different. Until now, the hill near the Rama base had interfered with the Gigantic’s movements. But after communicating with Clem, he gradually sneaked out of the hill and moved towards headquarters.

Kuong-! Kuong-! Kuong-!

The Gigantic definitely became faster when they moved away from the hill. Besides, it was easy to read the movements and avoid it since they were moving in one direction. Fortunately he had become used to the movements in the last 10 minutes.

‘Pay attention! Pay attention! Pay attention! Pay attention!’

Ark concentrated and moved desperately. Just when he had moved 200 metres.....

–Kuak! These damn federation soldiers!

Two Rama warriors rushed towards Ark. They were Rama warriors who ran back after killing the federation soldiers near the front. They saw Ark as insignificant prey. They wanted to try and obtain a bit more achievements

before dying. But their timing was bad.

–Hyung-nim, there! Where the X is marked on the ground!

He then heard Hegel's voice from his Nymphe. An X drawn on the snow caught his eye. Ark used Snow Walking to run towards where the X was marked before turning with a pleasant smile.

“Now! You stupid chunk of iron! Step on me!”

He shouted with a loud voice.

Roaaaaar!

A huge foot started to fall from 10 metres above. Ark threw his body back and shouted.

“Hegel, now!”

-Yes, Hyung-nim!

And the moment the foot stepped on the X marked spot!

Tung! Tung! Tung! Pajijiji!

A sphere buried in the ground started to emit intense electromagnetic waves.

-The electromagnetic mine has been triggered!

<Electromagnetic energy will be emitted in a 10 metre space and the shield will be neutralized for 5 minutes>

It was the electromagnetic mine used when the Silver Hand was fighting the Nakuma. Of course, it was a small mine so it couldn't completely neutralize the Gigantic's huge shield. The shield was peeled off the foot that stepped on the X spot.

“But that is good enough! Hegel!”

Ark yelled again!

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The area marked with an X exploded. The Rama near the area became bloody rice cakes and flew away. The Gigantic that was aiming its gun turrets at Ark also wobbled. The Gigantic tried to move its foot to regain its posture but the leg was shocked by the explosion. The Gigantic lost its centre of balance and fell down.

Ku ku ku ku, ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a deafening roar as the 50 metres Gigantic fell onto the battlefield. A smile of satisfaction spread on Ark's face.

“It's a success!”

Doom Machine (PART: 2)

“It’s almost finished.”

The blood stained Valencia looked around. The Gigantic had been destroyed once it stepped on the tank that self-destructed. It was an excellent choice. The Gigantic had already been stripped of its shield. The ordinary metal couldn’t withstand the explosive force of the nuclear fusion engine. In the end, the whole leg had been blown up and the Gigantic collapsed. Then Valencia moved quickly.

“Pedro, charge at the Gigantic!”

Valencia led 10 soldiers and attacked the lower part of the Gigantic. A group of Rama could be seen in the interior. They were a crew on board the Gigantic to block outside jamming. A gunfight started when Valencia and the armoured warriors burst in but they were engineers. Their opponents were elite warriors of the federation.

“Rush in and knock out the power reactor of the Gigantic!”

The armoured warriors took out the engineers and rushed towards the power reactor. If they took out the power reactor then the Gigantic would be destroyed.

-The Gigantic has been destroyed and 3,000 victory points acquired!

The message appeared in front of Valencia and his 10 subordinates.

Valencia’s morale soared and he left the Gigantic while taking care of the remnants of the Rama. His victory points quickly reached 4,000.

‘If I combine the achievements I received previously and the points I got for reporting the Rama base then that is 8,000 points. If the 4,000 victory points are converted then it is 12,000 achievements!’

12,000 achievements was an overwhelming amount! He would definitely be given a gold medal of valour.

‘But that only applies if I defeat the remaining Gigantic.’

There were 2 Gigantic that emerged from the Rama base. Only one was remaining now. It was running around somewhere on the Rama’s side but there was no guarantee it wouldn’t attack the federation. However, the biggest problem was the remaining power of the federation army.

‘There are only 150 troops remaining. And there are only 50 members of the armoured platoon left.’

The armoured platoon had received the most damage from the Gigantic. Furthermore, 3 Memeods were destroyed by the pincer attack of the Gigantic and Rama so only 2 were remaining.

‘But I have no choice. If I can’t defeat the Gigantic then the war won’t end. No, we will lose. Then there is no meaning in receiving the victory points. I will obtain nothing!’

“Pedro, reform the battle arrangements. Clean up the Rama and advance towards the other Gigantic!”

Valencia led the troops towards the Gigantic. Then he noticed dozens of soldiers moving in the opposite direction.

‘What’s the? Why are those guys.....wait? Perhaps.....?’

Valencia watched them carefully. He remembered those soldiers. They were the mercenary troops that had their truck fall into a pit and were given Ark’s henchmen to help.

‘And just now they emerged from the Rama’s headquarters with Ark. Then.....’

He had some lingering questions through the battle. He had wondered how Ark and his henchmen managed to get behind enemy lines first. He still

didn't understand but one thing was clear. Ark was associated with that mercenary group! They had devised the truck falling into the pit to trick Valencia and join Ark.

'This was all planned from the beginning? They wanted to join with Ark to stab me in the back and then run away in the confusion? And they are right in front of me!'

Valencia glared at them before speaking to Pedro.

"Pedro, have the armoured platoon....."

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

A loud roar rocked the battlefield. When he flinched and turned around, the sight of the Gigantic collapsing caught his eye. It was a scene that Valencia never even considered.

"T-that guy is.....?"

"Ark! He is Ark!"

The person standing in front of the Gigantic was surprisingly Ark.

'He hadn't run away yet?'

All thoughts of the mercenary group disappeared from Valencia's head.

'This is an opportunity! I don't need to worry about some mercenaries. I can dispose of them once the battle ends. I have bigger fish to fry right now. It won't be a problem if I accidentally kill a soldier during a fight against the Gigantic. If I become the hero who won the Beltana war then I can make it go away, even if I become chaotic. My first priority is making sure he dies to prevent him from reporting about the Carrier MR-II!'

"Pedro, follow me!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Valencia operated his battle suit and rushed towards Ark. 10 armoured

warriors followed him. Valencia ran across the snow towards Ark. At the same time, Ark was rushing towards the collapsed Gigantic. Needless to say, the Gigantic being knocked down was all Ark's strategy.

‘There is no method to escape the Gigantic. However, it is suicide to fight among the federation soldiers. I should sneak out of the battlefield and wait until the battle ends before joining back up with the federation. I have to seal the Gigantic's movement in order to do this.’

Ark came to that conclusion. That's why he used the detachment to devise a way to sneak out from the Gigantic's view! Ark used himself as bait to gain some time while the detachment buried dozens of C-6 in a specific area. The moment the Gigantic stepped on the X, it was hit by an electromagnetic mine and the foot blown up by C-6! With the foot damaged, the Gigantic would collapse to the ground and it was possible to beat it.

‘But I can't seal the movements with just that!’

There were 2 legs. Besides, it was a lump of machine with 386 computers attached! Despite falling down, the Gigantic was called the Devil of the Battlefield for a reason. Not surprisingly, the Gigantic tried to turn its remaining leg 180 degrees and raise the huge body.

‘I have to make it fully collapsed!’

That was the reason why Ark was running towards the Gigantic. The shield around the Gigantic's leg still wasn't recovered from the electromagnetic mine. And dozens of C-6 had exploded so the foot and ankle became ragged. Ark ran quickly and wielded his sword.

Kang-! Kang-! Kang-!

Even if it was weakened, the sword wasn't enough to get through the metal. However, Ark wasn't thinking about attacking the ankle with the sword. The reason he hit the ankle with his sword was.....

“There!”

Ark's eyes lit up. The moment the Gigantic was hit with the sword, some blurry colours appeared on the armour. It was entirely blue while the part hit directly by the C-6 explosion was red or orange. The colours represented the durability of the armour! The blue parts were the areas that didn't receive any damage while the red was where the durability was at the lowest point. It wasn't visible but it meant there was a crack in the armour.

'I wouldn't have known this without Metallurgy.'

It was the skill he learnt in order to avoid being scammed by Tori, Metallurgy! Ark was able to grasp the Gigantic's durability thanks to Metallurgy. One of the applications of Metallurgy was finding the status of the metal with a single tap. Therefore Ark could identify the status of the Gigantic's armour.

'This is the weakest place in the Gigantic's armour!'

Ark took out a C-6 from his bag and attached it to the armour part glowing red. He then threw his body facedown to the ground on the other side!

Pepepepeng!

A hole was blown in the armour of the ankle.

"That's it!"

Ark cheered as the Gigantic wobbled and collapsed again. The ankle could no longer support the 50 metres body thanks to the hole. This was Ark's final goal. He had completely sealed the Gigantic's movements. Now he just had to hide and leave the rest to the federation army. If he joined up after the battle ended then Valencia couldn't attack Ark anymore.

'That Valencia bastard, I'm curious about what expression he will have on his face.'

Ark imagined Valencia's bitter expression with a satisfied smile. All of a sudden Hegel's voice was screaming through the Nymphe.

–Hyung-nim! D-danger!

“What?”

Ark turned with a bewildered expression.

Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu!

10 shells were flying towards him? However, Ark wasn't looking at the shells. 10 armoured warriors were rushing across the snow. No, it was the person leading the group!

“.....Valencia!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

At the same time, the place where Ark was standing exploded. Smoke and flames soared from the spot the 10 shells hit. However, Valencia wasn't satisfied with just that.

“Shoot! Make sure he doesn't leave alive!”

“Don't stop shooting even if you see that bastard's body!”

“We have to kill him before any other soldiers arrive!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Valencia and the 10 armoured warriors continued firing. Bullets relentlessly fell and pieces of ice and dirt flew up. Valencia took out his beam sword as he narrowed the distance and shouted.

“Check that guy's corpse! Look for it!”

“I can't find it!”

“I don't see it over here either!”

“It can't be! He couldn't have survived all of that! No, it doesn't matter even if he is alive. If he is alive then he is clearly hiding somewhere. Don't miss him! Look for him everywhere!”

Valencia ordered with a cruel expression. Then Pedro's voice was heard from behind him.

"Leader-nim, look over here!"

He turned and saw Pedro pointing towards the Gigantic's ankle.

"There are traces that someone entered here. He went inside through the hole!"

"That rat bastard. He must've run away. But....."

Valencia stared at the hole before smiling.

"He dug his own grave by running into an inconspicuous place like this. Pedro, enter the Gigantic and chase after him. Take care of it inside the Gigantic! Do you know what I mean? Wipe out everything that catches your eye. I will take responsibility. If we take care of everybody inside the Gigantic then it will be the federation's victory. No, it will be your victory!"

"I understand!"

The armoured warriors moved inside the Gigantic. Their target was the engineers and power reaction inside the Gigantic and.....Ark. Now that the armoured platoon had entered the Gigantic, the destruction of the Rama engineers and power reactor was guaranteed. Therefore, the armoured platoon's top priority was Ark! Valencia and the armoured warriors entered the Gigantic and followed Ark's traces.

"Leader-nim, there is an object moving in front of us!"

"That guy!"

Valencia's eyes flashed and he shouted.

"This is a small passage. There is nowhere for him to run away. Fire!"

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

The 10 warriors started firing their Gatling guns inside the narrow

passage. Hundreds of bullets flew through the passage that was only 3 metres! Valencia and the armoured warriors filled the aisle with bullets. They moved forward 10 metres until they reached the place with the power reactor. The running shadow screamed and collapsed.

Kaekang!

A dog had died.

“H-Hyung-nim!”

Hegel looked around with a pale face. It had happened in an instant. After the Gigantic stepped on the electromagnetic mine and C-6, Ark had finally managed to destroy its other leg. While the Silver Hand and Royal Guards were burying the electromagnetic mine and C-6, Ark had distracted the Gigantic for 10 minutes. In other words, a single person had knocked down the Devil of the Battlefield. It was unbelievable even when he saw it with his own eyes!

‘That is Hyung-nim! The Hyung-nim I will follow for the rest of my life!’

Ark’s existence was beyond that of a hero to Hegel. Yet Hegel witnessed a shocking sight in the next moment. 10 shells were flying towards Ark! They were sent by Valencia and the 10 armoured platoon. They were also rushing towards Ark’s location while shooting indiscriminately.

‘Fortunately Hyung-nim managed to enter the Gigantic through the hole and protected himself.....’

Valencia and the armoured warriors had immediately entered behind him. It was obvious what would happen!

“I can’t just let this happen! I have to stop those bastards!”

Hegel glared and ran over to the hole while pulling out his dagger. And just as he was about to jump in the hole!

“Hey! Stop!”

Someone exclaimed as they grabbed Hegel’s ankle. Hegel turned with amazement as he heard an unexpected voice. A pile of snow behind the Gigantic’s leg started shaking and a head emerged.

“Are you trying to commit suicide? You can’t take care of those bastards.”

“Eh? H-Hyung-nim! Ark hyung-nim!”

“You’re going to burst my eardrums. Did you really think guys like them could kill me?”

“Hyung-nim, how did you survive?”

“Ha, do you think it is that easy to go to hell?”

.....But he really was close to hell this time. Ark crawled out of the pile of snow and looked at a flickering gauge on the upper right corner.

-Health:
32/990

He only had 32 health left!

‘If I hadn’t loaded a recovery ampoule in advance.....’

Ark eyes an empty glass capsule.

Recovery Ampoules (Medium)

Item Type: Health Recovery Drug

A special nutrients supplement refined at a high concentration using biotechnology.

In Galaxian, there are typically two types of recovery systems. One way is to load it on the Nymphe beforehand or to drink it directly. The recommended method is to load it on the Nymphe to use it. The absorption rate is slower than drinking it directly and the health recovered

is lower. However, if it is loaded on the Nymphe then the supplement can be directly injected into the DNA and can raise the recovery rate of the body for a short period of time. Only one ampoule can be loaded on the Nymphe at a time.

* If the ampoule is drunk: 300~400 health will be recovered in 3 minutes.

* If loaded on the Nymphe and injected: 500 health can be recovered immediately.

It was the recovery ampoule he picked up when escaping from the Rama's bunker. It was loaded on the Nymphe beforehand and could be used like a bullet. In fact, at first he thought a method like that was too complicated. But there were some convenient parts when used directly. Unlike the other games that required swallowing a potion, if the ampoule is loaded on the Nymphe then it could be injected with a simple command. Of course, only one recovery ampoule could be used with that method in a battle. Mounting another ampoule on the Nymphe would take more time than drinking. However, this meant it could be used in battle while swinging his sword. Ark was able to survive thanks to that. He had come under fire from Valencia's group. Ark's health fell in an instant.

If he had to take out a potion and drink it then he would've died long beforehand. But the loaded ampoule on the Nymphe meant he didn't have to go through such processes!

“Recovery!”

His health that had gone down to 10 points recovered by 500. Ark conquered the crisis and immediately hid behind the Gigantic's leg to prevent further damage. And he used the shovel to conceal his body.

‘But even so.....’

He felt furious just remembering it. If he was discovered by Valencia during

battle then he would be killed secretly. He was expecting that. However, actually experiencing it was different from his expectations.

‘He really tried to kill me?’

Ark couldn’t stand it. He had no intention of letting them get away with it. Then Hegel tilted his head to one side and asked.

“How did they find traces of Hyung-nim inside the Gigantic?”

“Ah, that? That is.....”

“Ark!”

Just as Ark laughed and was about to reply. A bike navigated between the federal army and approached the Gigantic. It was the rest of the detachment that had been spotted by Valencia. They found bikes abandoned on the battlefield and returned to Ark’s location. Clem jumped down from the bike and said.

“What is going on? I saw Valencia and his thugs rushing here.”

“He tried to kill Hyung-nim! I saw it!”

Hegel quickly answered. Anger spread over the faces of the Silver Hand and Royal Guards.

“I heard your words but.....I really can’t forgive a commander who tries to kill his own allies on the battlefield. They can’t get away with this!”

“I have no intention of letting them get away with it.”

Ark shook his head and his eyes looked away from Clem. Ark’s gaze was fixed on a circular object tied to the back of Clem’s bike. Ark looked at the metal sphere and laughed.

“I’ll have to teach them a lesson.”

“Perhaps.....?”

“If that guy wants it so much then I’ll have to see it through.”

Ark grabbed the handle of the bike that the metal sphere was attached to. He got on the bike before explaining to Clem and the other members. The bike roared like a beast and entered the hole opened in the Gigantic.

Kuaaaaaaah-!

The engine sound echoed through the narrow passage. It moved down the passage before some corpses caught his eye. The corpses of the Rama.....

It was clear that Valencia and the armoured platoon had moved down this passage. Valencia had thought they were chasing after Ark but he was actually hiding in a pile of snow. If they searched the area then they would've noticed the pile of snow. Then Rune Carving surfaced in his head! So he used it on the body of a dead Rama warrior and summoned the hell hound. And it left trails as it went inside the Gigantic! Valencia never thought about searching the area and chased after a dog. And Valencia realized he made a mistake after the dog died.....

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Ark passed the corpse of the hell hound and heard shots. He had only travelled 50 metres from the ankle of the Gigantic. The Rama engineers wouldn't just watch as the armoured federation warriors entered the Gigantic. The shots heard were due to a shoot-out between Valencia's group and the Rama clan. However, it was engineers fighting against elite troops.

'The result of the battle is obvious.'

Not surprisingly, the shots stopped at almost the same time. The Rama engineers had probably been killed by Valencia. And they were in the midst of trying to seize the nuclear power reactor.

Hak-!

Ark continued until the narrow passage ended and a wide space unfolded. There was a complex instrument panel with a large black sphere rotating in the middle. It was the power source inside the Gigantic! Several Rama

engineers were collapsed around the power source. Valencia and his henchmen were surrounding the power source.

“Valencia!”

“Huk, how did this guy?”

Confusion spread over Valencia’s face as he saw Ark. However, he smiled and lifted his Gatling gun after a few moments.

“You came here just to die!”

“Shut up and eat this!”

Ark jumped off the bike and shouted. But the accelerating bike didn’t stop. And.....

Teong!

The bike crashed into Valencia. Normally Valencia would be crushed by the bike.....but he only flew back a few metres thanks to the battle suit. Valencia glared as he got a nosebleed from the bike and growled.

“Kuak! This bastard!”

“Leader-nim! The b-bike.....”

A stuttered scream emerged from Pedro’s mouth. Valencia who was about to run after Ark frowned and turned.

“Now’s not the time to worry about the bike!”

“T-that’s not it! The bike.....it has a nuclear fusion engine! And the self-defence mechanism.....”

“What?”

Valencia’s face darkened as he paid attention to Pedro’s words. There was a metal sphere attached to the bike! Like Pedro said, the bike had a nuclear fusion engine attached to it. This was the reason Ark waited for the detachment before entering after Valencia. Ark might’ve created the

electromagnetic mine and C-6 to trap and seal the Gigantic's movements but there was no guarantee that it would work.

'If only there was some way to give more damage.....'

Then Valencia used the self-destructing nuclear fusion engine to defeat the Gigantic. Therefore Ark discovered that the nuclear fusion engine could be used like bomb! He ordered the detachment to obtain a nuclear fusion engine and bring it back to him. That was only possible thanks to the Scavenger Heksu. Heksu's profession meant he was well versed in mechanical engineering! Therefore a Scavenger was able to take out the nuclear engine without it exploding. However, unlike Ark's concerns he didn't have any difficulties sealing off the Gigantic's movements. Therefore the nuclear fusion engine had become pointless. So.....

"I'll give it to you guys."

Ark muttered and laughed.

-The self-destruct mechanism of the nuclear fusion engine has been started.

<Amount of time remaining until the destruction: 3 seconds.....2 seconds.....1 second>

"Ah, no!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a red flash and the body of the Gigantic exploded.

'Now!'

A smile flashed on the face of a blond youth. The reason he played Galaxian was to meet Ark.

He had chased after Ark and arrived at Nephalim only to discover that Ark was arrested and sent away to the disputed planet Beltana. So he waited on Nephalim but lost his patience after a fortnight passed. He made a resolution. He killed some guards. Thus he became the protagonist of another incident in Nephalim. Therefore he was locked in chains.

‘I read in the news that the federation is lacking troops so they’ve been forcibly conscripting any pioneers who become criminals. And in the last few months, most of the prisoners have been sent to Beltana! Ark was sent to that place!’

Naturally he would be sent to Beltana as well. That was what he thought. His head was only full with meeting Ark. And now I knew that they would meet soon. Yet.....yet.....

“Yes, you really did an absurd thing.”

A federal investigator questioned him after he was arrested.

“This is the first time an incident like this has occurred in Nephalim. Ha, don’t make me laugh. You destroyed 3 androids and even injured a guard soldier? I investigated and discovered that you received the title of R-14’s mission related master. Why would a guy like that just snap and commit a crime? That’s funny. Do you think I would believe something like that? Do you think that all investigators belonging to the galactic federation are stupid?”

He never thought they were stupid. He told the investigator that.

“That isn’t true..... There is no denying that I committed a crime..... Just give me a punishment.”

“Don’t worry. The penalty will be beyond what you imagined. But now right now.”

“Right now.....what do you mean?”

“Tell me the mastermind.”

“Mastermind.....what mastermind?”

“Didn’t I tell you? A federal investigator isn’t stupid. I’m not naive enough to believe a R-14 master suddenly went crazy and committed a crime. You clearly have some other purpose. Who is it? Who gave you instructions to do something like this? Is it the Tree of Life, the organization that opposes mechanical life forms and androids?”

“The Tree of Light.....I don’t know anything about that.”

“Heh, you’re still not going to tell me? Think about it. The Tree of Life is just like a cult. Yes, I don’t know how you ended up with them but if you tell me then you won’t be conscripted into the military.”

“That.....would be a problem.....being forcibly conscripted.....I did it in order to receive that.....”

“What? You want to be forcibly conscripted? Ha, you really are playing around. You committed a crime so that you would be drafted into the military? That is impossible. Do you know that the galactic federation has a special anti-terrorism act?”

“Anti-terrorism.....special act?”

“Suspected terrorist lose all human rights.”

Since then, the blond youth’s human rights were ignored. He spent days being injected with the SMT-518 that caused itching. The torture had begun. Normal users would only be able to resist for a while. However, he was a user who had lived 1 year as a vegetable. This was nothing compared to the frustration he felt then. And no matter the torture, this was still a game. If he left the unit then it wouldn’t affect him. But he didn’t run away.

“I.....I really.....don’t have any other plan.....I just want to be conscripted.....”

He kept on claiming his innocence. He put up with the torture and claimed innocence for a fortnight. His patience made even the investigator sick of it.

“This damn guy. Okay. If you really want to be conscripted. Bah, this stupid child. If you want to then go on the battlefield and see what it means to be prisoner!”

‘I-I did it! Finally! I finally get to meet Ark!’

The blond youth had endured a fortnight’s torture in order to meet Ark! His face glowed with his accomplishment.

“You will face hell on the disputed planet Hanan!”

“H-Hanan? W-what about Beltana?”

“Beltana? That has ended already.”

“I-it has ended.....w-what do you mean?”

“I have to explain something like that to you? Shut up and walk!”

“W-wait a minute.....I.....”

He was dragged out of the prison by the investigator. A video started displaying some urgent news as he entered a hallway.

-The galactic federation has defeated the Rama on the disputed planet Beltana!

-The war for Beltana in the Bellin constellation has been ongoing for 1 year and finally the Rama has been defeated.

–According to the military announcement, the Rama central base was discovered and reinforcements dispatched to Beltana. The army then stormed the Rama’s central base in a surprise attack. A bold hero blew up the Fairy and Star Gate and the federal army valiantly fought to defeat the Gigantic that had appeared. As soon as the federal forces return to Istana, an award ceremony will be held to hand out the awards for their achievements.

–The amazing hero representing the Beltana garrison.....

‘This is ridiculous!’

The blond youth’s face darkened.

“This is ridiculous!”

Valencia slammed his fist down on the table and shouted.

“I was the commander in this battle! I also destroyed a Gigantic! The 1st armoured platoon and I should receive the most achievements in this war! So why is the guy representing the Beltana garrison.....”

“Now isn’t the time to be saying things like that.”

Haman sighed and shook his head. Valencia frowned at his words.

“What does that mean?”

“I received information from the prisoner unit commander Peratul after the battle ended and he returned to the base. The information about the central base that you brought. It seems another soldier sent the Carrier MR-II from a hostile area. The soldier’s Nymph was checked and it was discovered to be true.”

“T-that....”

“That’s not all. I also received some testimonies that you deliberately attacked some allies on the battlefield.”

“I was framed!”

Valencia exclaimed anxiously as his eyes wildly rolled around the room.

“Isn’t it common to injure teammates with splash damage from a bomb during a battle? And I wasn’t the one that deliberately attacked an ally! That guy deliberately blew up the nuclear fusion engine and killed me as well as

the 10 people in my group!”

“Is there any way to prove that?”

Valencia closed his mouth at Haman’s question. In Galaxian, a person who committed PK would automatically become chaotic even if there were no witnesses. But there were exceptions. If the person killed first attacked the person then it would be justified as self-defence and they would receive immunity to the chaotic status. That applied to Valencia. Valencia and the 10 armoured warriors had been deliberately blown up by the nuclear fusion reaction inside the Gigantic.

But Valencia had damaged that person first so it wasn’t recognized as PK. Valencia and his group had died in the explosion. All the experience flew away and no evidence remained on the Nymphe. He could submit his Nymphe as evidence but there would be no data on it.

“But there is a bigger problem.”

Haman sent Valencia an uncomfortable expression and said.

“You’ve been accused of using your position as the leader of the 1st armoured platoon to take bribes from the prisoners to protect them. Do you know what a serious problem that is? If the investigation results reveal that it is true then it will deprive you of your status.”

“W-what! Who dared say such slander? That guy! Is it that guy?”

Valencia shouted angrily.

“It’s me.”

He heard an answer from behind him. Confusion spread on Valencia’s face as he turned around.

“You....why are you.....?”

“She is the inspector dispatched by the galactic federation to grasp the situation in Beltana. She worked at the supplies tent for the prisoners and

collected the relevant information.”

“That’s what this is.”

A woman wearing a uniform lifted a thick stack of papers.

“It was easy for me to gather more data thanks to ‘that’ user.”

The woman speaking in an emotionless face was Irina.

On Hanan, a planet in the Bellin constellation.

In contrast to Beltana, a large number of corpses on the battlefield belonged to the federation. A Rama warrior who was silently watching the battlefield asked.

“The front line on Beltana collapsed?”

“Yes, I heard they were attacked by the federation and were destroyed.”

“Weren’t two experimental Gigantic transmitted to Beltana? Was the Star Gate destroyed before the Gigantic was sent through?”

“The BK-III and BK-IV were sent through as scheduled.”

“Yet they were still destroyed?”

The Rama warrior turned around. However, his red eyes were curious rather than angry.

“Who? Who commanded the Beltana army?”

“His name is Valencia.”

“Valencia? I never heard of that name.”

“According to the information from our home planet, he is the leader of the 1st armoured platoon on Beltana. But the soldier announced as having the highest achievements is someone else.”

“The commander wasn’t the person who gained the most achievements?”

“Yes, the person’s name is Ark.”

“Ark!”

The Rama warrior twitched. Then a meaningful smile appeared on his face after thinking for a while.

“Ark.....it isn’t impossible if it is that guy.”

“You know that name?”

“Of course. I know it. No, I can’t forget it.”

“But aren’t there many people with the same name?”

“Yes, there are many people with the same name. If you just mentioned the name Ark then I wouldn’t care. Because I’ve seen the name Ark many times when fighting against the federation. But if it is someone who gained the most achievements on the battlefield and defeated a Gigantic then it must be him. He has to be the real one.”

“Real? There are real and fake?”

“Let’s see?”

The Rama warrior murmured before turning around.

“Anyway, I don’t have time to worry about his movements.”

The Red Slaughter. It was the name he was called on Hanan.

At the same time, in an underground plaza of the galactic federation building in Nephalim. There was a blue light as a user was transmitted through the Star Gate. The light disappeared and people flocked like vultures around the user.

“Please give us a short interview!”

“How does it feel becoming a person with the highest merit after being a prisoner? Can you fully explain the situation on the battlefield?”

“Did the Gigantic really appear on Beltana?”

“You defeated a Gigantic directly?”

“I heard you don’t have a sponsor yet. Scouting offers should be sent by the galactic federation and the 4 big businesses. Have you decided on one?”

The people swarming around the Star Gate were reporters. And the name of the returned soldier.....

“Ark-nim, please tell me how you feel leaving as a prisoner and returning a hero!”

Ark, it was the name of the new hero.

TO BE CONTINUED